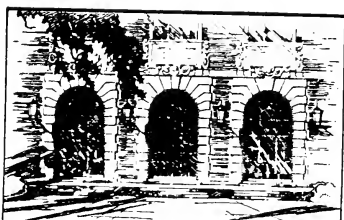




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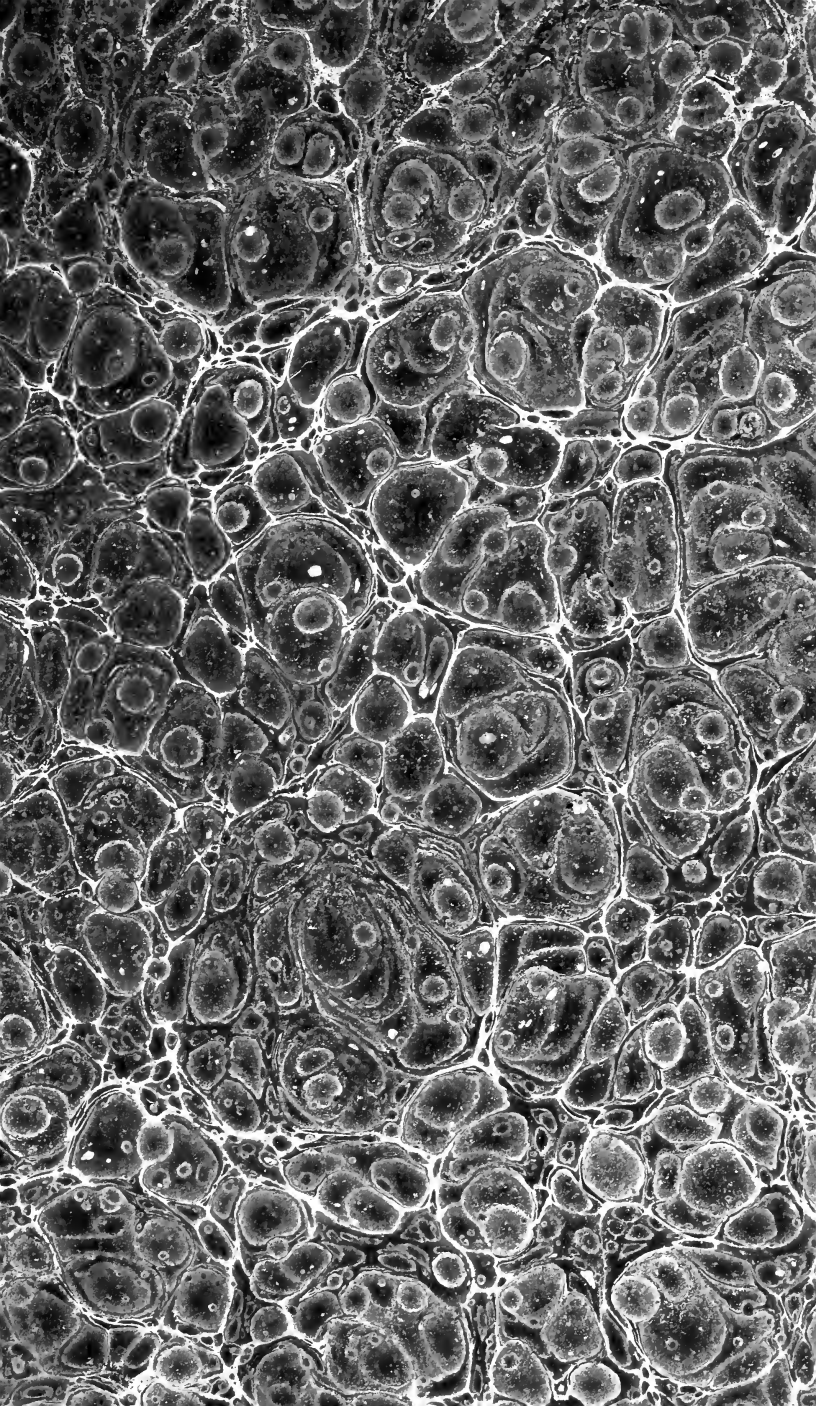


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TOM BOWLING:

A Tale of the Sea.

BY

CAPT. FREDERICK CHAMIER, R.N.

AUTHOR OF

“THE LIFE OF A SAILOR,” “THE SPITFIRE,”

“JACK ADAMS,” ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,

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TOM BOWLING.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH IS SHEWN THAT A PEACE-OFFICER MAY BE PUT
UPON THE WAR ESTABLISHMENT, AND THAT PROMISES
AND PIE-CRUST ARE SYNONYMOUS.

CORNISH was himself a magistrate. He seldom acted, because once or twice some young ladies who were brought up before their worships for disorderly conduct, had made certain faces at their judge, and had expressed themselves so familiarly, that the case had been dismissed without much justice being done, although some money had been expended. He knew the magistrate who had issued the warrant against him well, and was half inclined to ven-

ture upon the familiarity of acquaintance ; but in this he was cut short. A cold, formal salute passed between the parties ; the statement of Mary was read ; and the constable examined as to the preparation of war between the duellists. It was no use contradicting the assertion of the constables, for the loaded pistols were produced. Both principals and their seconds were bound over and called upon for securities. Cornish and his friend were provided very shortly ; but Bowling was not so fortunate. He sent to Boniface, who civilly declined, stating it was from religious motives ; it being written, " He who stands security for another shall smart for it." The rector was at last sent for ; and upon the principle that he was bound to maintain order and keep peace, he stood security for both. Another soon came forward ; and Bowling, at nine o'clock, found himself free to contract his marriage with Susan, to which ceremony the doctor, of course, was invited.

In the meantime Cornish, backed up by the Irish gentleman, who considered this interposition of the law an infringement on the liberty of the subject, had called at the Eagle, and in very unmeasured language had fulminated his everlasting enmity against Boniface. He swore that from that moment the whole of his custom

should go to the Falcon ; that the rent should be raised at the expiration of the lease (which had but a few months to run) to such a sum as would render it impossible for Boniface to compete with the rival establishment ; and he seemed to chuckle, like a fiend, over the impending ruin of the family.

The blood, the good old English blood, mantled in Boniface's cheek. He was a free-born man, and he felt stung to the heart at the insulting manner in which Cornish had expressed his determination.

"You can't ruin me, sir," said Boniface. "I'll take the next house to-morrow—and I'll have a crown clapped on that eagle's head ; but I'm none the less obliged to you for the wish,—I dare say I can live without Captain Cornish ; and my daughter can get an honest living without his assistance either."

"I'm glad to hear it," replied the villain, maliciously ; "as, for the future, she will not require my support."

Boniface turned pale. And as Cornish walked away, exulting in the pang he had inflicted on the poor girl, who, as she heard the words, sank down, wishing the ground to open and swallow her as she hid her face in her sister's lap, and cried aloud, he added, "You

had better keep that young lady at home, and not have her walking about the lanes at midnight."

"I shall take the unwarrantable liberty with you, Mr. Boniface," said the Irishman, "to express my utter disgust of your daughter's conduct; and to mention, in the most civil manner imaginable, that if I was not afraid of being put in the stocks I would make more whales on your back than ever were harpooned in the South Seas. Maybe that gallant captain and old opodeldoc talked loud in order that your girl might overhear it; and she made it an excuse to visit that elderly gentleman, who discourages field-sports by daylight. Come along, Cornish, and bad luck to me if I don't follow that jalap-and-rhubarb officer over half the world!"

The doctor heard it all; and putting his head out of the window, asked politely, "where a letter would find him."

"At Captain Cornish's, sir, where I should be mighty happy to find you."

"I shall not disappoint you long, sir," said the doctor.

Bowling was arranging himself for his marriage; the time was growing very short; and his chains were already forged. He thought of

nothing but Susan, and the affair of the morning had quite passed off from his memory. Not so the doctor, who had a strange predilection for danger: he never had allowed any boats to go on any desperate service without volunteering; and although the most excellent fellow in life, and a man least susceptible to an insult, without he saw it was premeditated, yet was always ready to rush into a duel, either for his friend or for himself, especially if he considered his friend as suffering under any disadvantage. As he dressed himself he kept his blood at fever heat, fulminating all manner of curses upon the girl and the Irishman, and vowing vengeance against the latter.

“I’ll give him a chance when we get back to Portsmouth,” he said; “I’m only bound to keep the peace within his Majesty’s dominions. We’ll see how far that extends outside of St. Helen’s!” And thus he continued until Bowling took his arm and popped him into a most cruel caricature of a carriage, a country post-chaise. Bowling’s portmanteau was handed in; and as they went down stairs they saw that they left the house of grief to go into that of joy. The poor girl was sobbing violently in the corner, whilst the parents stood aloof from her;—the father’s eye dry with anger, but the

mother's and sister's overcome with a discovery which added disgrace to the impending ruin of her family.

Upon Bowling's arrival the rector welcomed him. Mrs. Talbot shortly afterwards led in the bride most beautifully dressed; and there, in the quiet of a private room, the parties were united. Never did dark-eyed beauty look more bewitching than Susan. She shed no tears; and the fulfilment of her heart's best hope, and the sincerest wishes of happiness, followed the ceremony.

"My fee, Captain Bowling!" said the rector. And the doctor's lips were seen to move in unison with the good-natured man who gave his blessing, and paid himself on the rosy mouth of the blushing bride.

"Married and amen!" said the doctor; "there's another of his Majesty's best officers perfectly ruined. He never cared what he encountered when his lovely Susan was not gained; but now, Lord bless us, he'll not wet his feet in stepping out of the boat, but he'll have a gang-board to walk upon. Well, Captain Bowling, I'll give you my blessing; and if I had performed such a service as the reverend gentleman, I would claim the same fee."

"You have my consent to take it, doctor, for

you would have attended me to my death, and have been my friend to the last. The rector has made me happy; but you have preserved my honour." The doctor kissed her hand respectfully; and then Susan learned how nearly last evening's croak had been verified.

Bowling and his bride were to remain at Mrs. Talbot's until the leave was expired, then both were to go to Portsmouth. The rector and the doctor joined in the wedding-dinner; and at nine o'clock the strangers withdrew, and the happy couple were left alone.

The doctor hastened to Portsmouth, being anxious to effect an exchange with the surgeon of the Thames, and likewise particularly anxious to gratify the Irish gentleman with a duel of some kind, and in some place.

In the meantime, Cornish had raised up an enemy as implacable as his own second. Notice was given to Boniface to quit his house at the expiration of the lease; and Boniface having found out the condition of his daughter, the state of his mind may be readily imagined. The first blow was severe indeed; for who that has loved and doated on a child for years, can witness its shame!—who can hear of a daughter's dishonour, and not feel it as the heaviest calamity of life!—and who, although he may

mutter the word forgiveness, can ever erase the blot which darkens his mind, and makes existence a burden, unwillingly borne? Revenge, though a cowardly, is a feeling of extraordinary influence. How it strings the nerves, and makes the slave it is consuming strong and active to fulfil its object! With what avidity is any tidings received of the individual hated; and when once opposed to him, how deep must be the passion which sets death and danger at defiance, to realise his destruction!

The first feeling against Cornish had only partially subsided in the mind of the unhappy innkeeper, when the notice was brought concerning the house. Boniface, forgetting for an instant his family calamity, sought to secure the next house; indeed, the only one in the village which could answer his purpose; he however found it had been taken that morning in Captain Cornish's name, who intended to establish another person in the business, to crush the unfortunate father, or to drive him to some other place.

However much it may now be the fashion to decry the clergy, there are no men to whom we so willingly fly in affliction, or to whom we more readily resort for advice or consolation. The rector of a country village, beloved and re-

spected by his parishioners, is one of the most enviable of men. It is with sincere respect, not altogether devoid of awe, that the labourer raises his hat as his rector passes. Who is so welcome in the cottage of the poor, honestly struggling to maintain themselves? and who receive from the charitable hand of their pastor the well-merited relief, and find it accompanied by words expressive of sympathy and encouragement. How the widow and the orphan look to him for consolation and support! and with what contentment and happiness do the poor listen to his words!

Boniface led his daughter to the rector's house; it was ever open to the parishioners, and he was ever ready to receive them. Hearing that it was the landlord of the Eagle, the rector left his study, and opened the door to receive him. He saw before him a man who, in forty-eight hours, had experienced an alteration, the ravages of the yellow fever could not have effected. The poor fellow, without saying a word, led his daughter towards the clergyman, and merely pointed to her. The truth flashed across the mind of the worthy divine instantaneously; and as the girl sunk on her knees before him, he clasped his hands

together and said, "What heartless ruffian could have done this?"

There was no answer; the father could not speak; his voice was choaked; and the repentant and sorrowful child was bowed to the dust by shame and regret. The kind-hearted rector also allowed his feelings to master him; and for some time a dead silence prevailed.

"I cannot be mistaken," at last he said, "although Heaven is my witness how gladly I would find myself deceived." The father shook his head. "Then who has done this cruel deed?—It is your duty to her to proclaim him to the world."

"Oh, father! father!" cried Mary, "do not mention him—do not betray him!—I was alone to blame! And had I followed the advice of my mother, it never would have happened."

"Not mention him!" said the poor father; "for what else am I come here? I come to ask all the consolation of religion for you; but for myself, I come for revenge!"

The rector started at the deep, loud tone of voice, and caught the agony of the compressed lip which was distorted into an expression exceedingly malignant.

"This is no language for me to hear," meekly

replied the rector. "For her I will do all that this holy book has prescribed; but for you—'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.'"

"There are no words of comfort for me," said Boniface, more calmly; "I must be revenged—I cannot live without it. Who has done this, you ask?"

The daughter sprang upon her feet, and endeavoured by her hand to close her father's mouth. He turned away his head as he screamed rather than uttered, "That devil loosed from hell!—Cornish!" Mary fell down at his feet;—she had made the last effort to conceal her seducer, and now had fainted on the floor.

"Ay," continued the innkeeper, "Cornish—Captain Cornish—the man who is called a gentleman, and who lavishes his riches to ruin all within his reach. He placed me in the house I now occupy, for the sake of her who must then have been a child; having consummated his wickedness, he now seeks to ruin me. Would you believe it, sir—you who only see the bright side of these gentlemen, that, not contented with destroying my home and my happiness for ever, he has given me notice to quit my inn, and has taken the only house in the village, in order that I may lose every means

of existence, and be driven from the place of my birth?"

"Poor child!" said the rector, looking at Mary; "little do you know, as yet, how cold and cutting will be the conduct to which you have exposed yourself, and how one moment of indiscretion is followed by an age of penitence and shame. Examples are useless; human nature is frail indeed; and the prospect of riches, held out as a lure, secures the timid prey. How came you to allow one so much above you in life to pretend to be your lover?"

"There," replied the father, "I forgive her. We all endeavour in this world to surpass our neighbours: we all struggle for independence. My unhappy girl fell from believing the words of a villain. I have looked at her desk; here are his letters, in which he promises to marry her, and again and again implores her to trust to him. She did so; for what girl would disbelieve these letters?"

"The law will give you some compensation for the injury you have received at his hands," said the rector. "I can do nothing but rebuke his conduct; but you can have some redress by applying to a solicitor."

"There is but one in the village, and he is Captain Cornish's friend."

“You will find another near. Attorneys, like parrots, fly in pairs. One is useless; he would die of reconciliations, and starve of promoting peace. I advise you to jog Captain Cornish’s memory as to these letters, and on no account allow them to go out of your possession for a second. For your child’s sake, the sooner you quit the Eagle and the village the better: in another county this grievous sin may not be known. But remember, Mary, although the world may be blind to your iniquity, there is an eye above which never slumbers, and there are books in which every act is recorded. Penitence is the first step to amendment. Go to your chamber, and commune with yourself in secrecy. For you, Boniface, I cannot give advice further than to consult a legal man. It is a cruel and a cowardly act, which will bring down vengeance on its author; neither shall it be lost sight of by me, when my duty calls for chastisement.”

The unhappy pair slowly wended their way home, avoiding as much as possible the public eye.

“Cowardly ruffian!” said the rector, when human nature burst its control, and no ear was by to listen—“cowardly ruffian! to destroy all domestic happiness, and then meanly endeavour to drive the parent to destruction! But he shall

find an adversary in me, or rather a protector of the innocent."

The sign of the Eagle vibrated to and fro in the evening breeze, whilst that of the Falcon had been taken down. The usual labourers who frequented the former inn seemed now to find the inn opposite supplied with better beer; and even the posting, that once lucrative part of an innkeeper's establishment, seemed partially to have forsaken poor Boniface.

The thunder of the pulpit failed to strike the heart of him who studiously insulted the rector by composing himself to sleep the instant the sermon began; or, when sleep was driven away by the fervid eloquence of the clergyman, a letter was read of just sufficient importance to turn the tide of thought into another channel. Still Cornish was aware that the sermon was levelled at him, for his good-natured friend did not fail to rally him on the rector's remarks; to which he always answered, "I find them very composing, and I sleep better in church than elsewhere."

Boniface soon found out that the rector was right. Although he had lived in the village for years and years, he never knew that Mr. Clasp was an attorney. He thought he made his money by copying papers, and writing some local

news for a county paper. The large brass plate on the door of the best-looking house in the village shewed how litigious were the parishioners of the worthy rector ; for on that was engiaved, “ Mr. Pouch, Solicitor.”

Clasp was a clever fellow, and, like many clever fellows, only wanted an opportunity to rise in the profession he had chosen ; and he had some small degree of honesty about him—so rare a commodity in that line that it is worthy of record. The story of Boniface’s daughter having swelled the list of Cornish’s successes, now as plentiful as Leporello’s book of Don Juan’s infidelities, was known everywhere ; and Boniface was saved the trouble of a long statement of facts by Clasp informing him that “ his daughter’s misfortune had long since been expected, for that she had been frequently seen walking towards the house after dark.”

“ I want your advice,” said Boniface. “ Read these letters, and tell me what can be done. I have got some money that I put by for a rainy day, which, God knows, does not appear very far distant, for the clouds are dark enough above and around me ; but I don’t care what comes of me, so that I can punish him.”

“ A powerful adversary, Boniface !—purse so long that even Pouch cannot empty it ; a magis-

trate ; gives capital dinners ; single man, looking out for a wife ; everybody's nominal friend ; and, where they are not injured by so doing, everybody ready to assist him."

"But this is a free country, and the law is open to all."

"A pack of nonsense ! No greater slaves in existence ; and the courts of justice banged close against the poor."

"But there is justice to be had !"

"Yes, if you pay for it. Look at one instance : the wife of a rich man behaves improperly ; he can get rid of her by a divorce ; it will cost some thousands of pounds to get *this act of justice*. Let Hodge's wife be doubly criminal, Hodge cannot help her continuing his wife. Did you ever hear of the House of Lords troubling themselves about any person of the name, or any one in the situation of Hodge ? Not you, nor any one else. So, merely in that instance, justice is not equal ; and the poor man had better bow down with unresisting servility, than struggle against the power and the long purse of the rich."

CHAPTER II.

A SPICE OF AN HONEST LAWYER, AND A SAILOR'S
HONEYMOON.

“ If I do I’ll be—”

“ Don’t swear,” interrupted Clasp. “ I’m thinking of turning religious, and then no one will doubt my honesty. Let us see these letters. Strong language—very affectionate—considerable love, and all humbug. I can’t do any thing for you, and so I tell you ; and, what is more, I don’t want my six-and-eight-pence for your visit.”

“ But it is a breach of promise.”

“ No, it is not,” said Clasp, interrupting him. “ He says he will marry her,—how do you know he

will not? It is no breach of promise until he marries again."

"Oh, devil! devil!" ejaculated Boniface.

"Ay, now you have invoked the patron saint of solicitors, I have no doubt we shall get some wisdom. How old is your daughter?"

"Not quite sixteen."

"Did he take her away?" asked Clasp, hurriedly.

"Not he, he would leave her to starve—"

"Well advised there; I dare say, as magistrate, he has looked up to the law. Is she in the family way?"

"Oh, yes, to my everlasting disgrace!"

"I congratulate you, my friend,—luckiest thing in life—got him there—loss of services of child—he'll never get out of that."

"And can nothing be made of his vindictive malice in seeking to ruin me?"

"A comfortable action would lie on that score; but we must prove that he has really hurt your business."

"Go on with both—all my money, Clasp, take all, let me die in a ditch, or take refuge in a poor-house, but let me have revenge!"

"You must not talk about revenge; you must use the gentlemanly term, 'satisfaction.' Why if you shot him in a duel, it would be satisfaction;

or if he shot you it would be satisfaction—it's a word which has always puzzled the lawyers."

"Had it not been for my poor, foolish child he might now have been in the clutches of the devil."

"Bless you, Boniface, you may be a very good judge of ale, but you know nothing of this world, or the next. The gentleman to whom you just referred is never in a hurry for such acquaintances: he leaves them here to procure more for his net. Now for business. Forget, if you can, the unwelcome personage you have just named, and all his friends, and let us hear how much money you have got."

"I'm four or five hundred pounds the better for business; and I had left it all, every farthing, to her—oh! that I could—"

"Don't get lachrymose, if you please. Will your daughter swear that Cornish is the man?"

"Yes."

"And you have no idea that any lightness of character can be brought against her?"

"I cannot speak—I feel choaking with shame that the question could be asked!"

"Particularly creditable feelings, but excessively against information. Leave the rest to me, I'll do all I can for you, and, although I am an attorney, I'll not rob you much. Good-bye; I'll come this

evening and take a little refreshment in your back-parlour—we can talk over this business quietly.”

As Boniface slowly withdrew, Clasp rubbed his hands with rapture. “As good a case as I could desire, and, maybe, very profitable—no time to be lost—put on my best clothes. And now I’ll get upon the flood-tide, and live to have a house as large as Pouch’s !”

Two days after the marriage, Captain and Mrs. Bowling were on their way to Portsmouth ; and Susan’s heart swelled with delight as she saw the tall masts of the different ships. The doctor had procured lodgings ; and the happy couple—happy as young hearts with slender purses could be, got safe to their new abode. On the table, Bowling found official papers enough to occupy him for some time, and Susan had enough to do to make the house comfortable ; for of all desolate places, furnished lodgings at Portsmouth were the most desolate. Luck seemed to follow him :—his request, as to the exchange of the surgeons, had been complied with ; the gentleman who formerly belonged to the Thames preferring to sail with an honourable ; and Curlew, being sufficiently fond of himself, did not hesitate to give his consent to an exchange which would rid him of a man under whose charge he might be, and whom he hated like some of his own poison.

There were several letters from the port-admiral, addressed to the commanding-officer of the Thames, hurrying her equipment; and the report of the first-lieutenant was on his table ready to shew him that the reputation for activity which Bowling had gained in the Echo had not been forfeited in his absence. He gallantly saluted Susan as he appeared before her in his uniform; and she beheld him so adorned, with all a wife's pride and a woman's admiration.

"I must go on board, my dear, for an hour. I will not be longer; and perhaps I shall bring back with me either the doctor or the first-lieutenant."

"So soon, my dear, after our marriage!" replied Susan. "I would rather, indeed, be alone with you, than in the society of the most attractive."

"If I can do without them I will; but look at these heaps of papers, and remember that to-morrow I must be ready to answer any questions the admiral may ask. You would not like me to appear deficient before him?"

"Not for worlds; but I foresee the time is not far distant when you will be away from me, and I would pass that small remaining hour entirely with you."

"The first-lieutenant of the Thames, sir," said the servant-maid, "wishes to see you directly."

"There, my dear—there is a specimen of the

privacy of a public man's life. Let him come up."

The first-lieutenant was a fine, rough-looking man, who had had the honour to serve in that capacity for years; he being one of those active men who were bars to their own promotion—for every captain had declared he was much too good a first-lieutenant to be spoiled by being promoted. Hence he toiled and toiled, and was still a fixture, although a dozen junior officers had jumped over him. As he entered, he took no notice whatever of Mrs. Bowling, but merely said, "There is a court-martial to-morrow, at nine o'clock, sir, and you are to form one of the court. The admiral has inquired if you are returned, and wishes to see you at eight, at the office. I believe we are to go to sea almost directly." Susan would have given a deep sigh, but she was not going to disgrace her character of heroine by so very common an occurrence. But she did not regard the first-lieutenant with any particular kindness.

"I will go on board with you now," replied Bowling; "and you can return and dine with me, for I shall have plenty to do to get ready for to-morrow. Susan, my dear, I forgot to introduce you to Mr. Lanyard." Lanyard gave an awkward bow, and coloured up to the eyes as he saw, for the first time, the pretty features of Susan. He

kicked out one foot behind to balance his head as it went forward ; and he stammered out, " Fine day, Ma'am." And having made this desperate effort of civility, gladly escaped under the plea of getting the boat ready for the captain.

Captain Bowling found his frigate more forward than he expected ; everything appeared to have been done, and done well. There were hundreds of things to talk about and to order, and when he was about to leave the ship Mr. Lanyard told him that Captain Curlew was in the harbour, but not very well ; " and if," said the first lieutenant, " he cannot attend at the court-martial to-morrow, you will of course form one of the court."

" Surely I am senior to him, Mr. Lanyard ?" said Bowling, with some asperity.

" He says not, sir ; he says his commission is dated a day previous to yours."

" Very likely it is, for I have never remarked the date of mine ; but I will take it with me to-morrow. Here, youngster, tell my servant to be sure and put my commission in my pocket to-morrow : tell him the clerk has got it."

As Lanyard got on with the dinner he cast off his reserve, and the conversation was animated, although very annoying to Susan, who sat by crimsoning at every word.

" When we came to strip her," said Lanyard,

“she was very defective. The eyes of the stays were sadly worn, but she looked a better figure all bare than when she was covered with rigging. She has the neatest run fore and aft, from her catheads to her quarters, that ever I saw. From her cutwater to her stern-post there’s not a nicer model; and from her head to her stern she’s perfection itself.”

“A little padded and bolstered under her rigging,” said Bowling, chuckling at his wife’s crimson cheeks, and wishing to lead Lanyard on a little; “what do you think of her qualities?”

“She’s shallow in her hold, but carries her provisions well; her berths are all good; and she never labours much. She works uncommonly well, and is always quick and easy in stays.”

This last was too much for Susan, and she asked, with as much forbearance as she could command, who might be the subject of such very free conversation.

“You shall see her to-morrow,” said Bowling.

“You never saw a greater beauty in your life, ma’am,” said Lanyard. “I’ll take care she’s well stoned and scrubbed, and you shall see her as neat and as clean as any quality lady in the land. If we were not in Portsmouth harbour, we might dress her out a little; those colours always set her off. The gig is all ready, and the whip’s easily prepared.”

“I must insist upon knowing,” said Susan,

“who this lady is, of whom you both speak so familiarly.”

“Lady!” said Lanyard, with his eyes staring as if he thought Mrs. Bowling was mad; “Lady, Ma’am! Why, we are talking of the ship and her boat—the Thames and her gig.”

Bowling burst out a laughing. “I thought,” said he, “the letter puzzled you a little; but this conversation has alarmed you. I was just going to give you an account of our bridles, by which we now ride; and our hawses, with the buoys lashed to them; that would have followed the gig well. So, Susan, remember that whenever I am speaking of the lower rigging, or of caps, bonnets, and stays, I do not necessarily mean the dress of a woman, but the things belonging to a ship.”

“A just rebuke, Mr. Captain,” said Susan: “and yet I should like to know how you dress and undress a ship!”

“Dressing a ship out in colours, ma’am,” said Lanyard, “is hoisting all her flags to the royal mast-head and gaff-end.”

“Stop, stop, good Mr. Lanyard; I see I am foolish in asking questions, when I cannot understand the answers.”

“Sailors’ wives, my dear,” said Bowling, “must accustom their ears to sounds just as uncouth as a fox-hunter’s language, and you must now be aware

that what might shock the delicate sensibility of some people is nothing more than nautical phraseology." A long conversation now took place between the rough-spun Lanyard and his new captain; and the evening passed off well until nine o'clock, when Lanyard took his leave.

"A fine, savage, sailor-looking fellow that," said Susan.

"One of those, my darling, who never had a Susan to instruct him in his youth, or ever had the good fortune which has crowned the efforts of Tom Bowling. If I can, I will serve him. Your Curlews, and such-like mincing fellows, run away from an enemy; almost breed mutinies on board their ships; and yet get promoted as fast as their age will permit. That poor fellow, who has more wounds about him than Curlew has rings on his fingers, is at least forty years of age; and, being so poor that he can be of no service to others, is passed over in every promotion, and finds himself commanded by such a boy as myself."

"You will best shew how you have merited your own advancement, my dear, by your determination to forward so deserving an officer."

"Why, as I'm alive, you are going to fall in love with old Lanyard!"

"I shall be more in love with you when I hear that you have not imitated his former commanders,

but delighted the old boy's eyes with a fair prospect of promotion."

"To bed, to bed ! my Susan ! I must no longer lose the morning hours in slumbers, however sweet. The eye of the captain should seldom sleep, and never appear prying or curious ; but a good example is easily followed, and the activity in the captain ensures a corresponding activity in the junior officers."

It was Bowling's first exhibition at a court-martial ; and he felt that very young wish to do justice which is ever uppermost in a generous man's mind. The culprit was a fore-mast man who had broken his leave, being too drunk and too jolly to return, and who, belonging to the *Blanche*, had been brought on board and, at Curlew's desire, brought to a court-martial by the first lieutenant. The *Royal William* was then the guard-ship at Spithead ; and thither Bowling repaired, arriving, according to his usual mode, at least five minutes *before* his time. His argument was—"I can wait for others, but others may not like to wait for me." Curlew came on board shortly afterwards ; and then Captains Freightall, and Skinner, formerly the passing captain of Curlew, arrived. They both anxiously inquired news of Curlew's father, disregarding, or affecting to forget, Bowling, who very quietly walked on the poop and satisfied his curiosity as to his

rank ; for in these times the navy-lists did not come out quite so regularly as at present, and the official list on board the *Blanche* or the *Thames* had not the new captains' names. The court was soon formed, and Curlew, anxious to shew his seniority, took his place as the superior officer to Bowling.

Bowling was no man to cede the one-hundredth part of an inch of a right ; and when he was told to be seated, he modestly hinted that Curlew occupied his place.

"No," said Freightall, "Captain Curlew has the advantage of seniority."

"I imagine not," said Bowling, respectfully ; "but I can easily set the matter to rest. Here is my commission."

"Dated," said Curlew, "the 12th ; mine is the 11th."

"No, mine is dated the 3rd of the month previous. In short, mine is dated the day after the action for which I was promoted." There was no use in comparing commissions. Curlew, who had been sick the day previous, complained of sudden indisposition ; and Bowling occupied his proper place.

The court-martial was on one of those frivolous complaints which ought to have been punished on board the *Blanche*, and not brought publicly forward to disgrace the whole navy by that now abandoned

degradation of flogging round the fleet. Bowling, although young, was sensible how much this fearful punishment tended to lessen the character of the British seaman, and how very little it operated as an example to others. The frequency of its recurrence familiarized the sailor to the sight, as the frequency of public executions failed to intimidate the youngster in iniquity, from its becoming a spectacle of amusement and a field for light-fingered operations, rather than an awful warning.

The usual folly took place of clearing the court a dozen times, whilst the judges got a little hint from the judge-advocate ; and thus they concealed their ignorance upon points which ought to have been familiar to them all. And to this day the same absurdity is continued ; shewing to the man under trial that his judges are ignorant of the law under which they would condemn him, and that, as no counsel can be admitted to bother them but by their own permission, it is imperative that they should have some regular rules which, by the exertion of half an hour's study, may make all captains sufficient sea judges to act in accordance to law and to common sense. What is allowed at one court-martial is denied at another ; and hence the general discontent so loudly expressed against those courts, and which hundreds of men have vainly hoped to rectify.

The discontent of the sailor who is tried by captains, and not by his equals, was a joke to the discontent of Curlew, when he found the *perverse* captain, as he called Bowling, his senior for ever. The success of the latter officer, from his bravery, skill and perseverance, was always a thorn rankling in the side of Curlew; and his father's well-timed hint of his irritability under control had ever since contributed to render him discontented with himself and his officers.

The *Blanche* was ordered to the Baltic; so was the *Thames*. Lord Nelson was in those seas, under the command of Sir Hyde Parker; and where Nelson was, there was always hope. He had fought the battle of Copenhagen, and England rang with his applause. Animated with the desire of once more serving under his eye, Bowling, although loth to quit his Susan, urged on the necessary work of the frigate; but Curlew, annoyed at finding Bowling still his senior officer, exchanged into a frigate going to the West Indies. There was the usual pride in this affair. A man always likes to be seen in a superior station where he has served as an inferior; and with feelings nettled even against his own father for not having inquired the date of Bowling's commission, and got his signed the day previous, he read his commission in his new ship; and from his fretful manner the officers were

convinced, that the ship would neither be in crack order, nor as comfortable as the service permitted.

On board the Thames everything went well. There was a regularity that ensured despatch. The men were not broken off from one task to begin another, and then relinquish that before it was properly commenced; but from the talent of Bowling, and the steadiness of Lanyard, they were saved much harassing work, and the Thames, the third day after Bowling's arrival, was at Spithead, with top-gallant-yards across. Every man was anxious to get to sea but the doctor. He could not get over the Irish gentleman's remarks; and he wrote him a letter, saying, that although going to sea in a few days, the insult would not grow less by distance, and that he should do the Irish gentleman the pleasure of calling him out upon the first opportunity.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH THERE IS GREAT CRY AND LITTLE WOOL, AS THE
DEVIL SAID WHEN HE SHEARED HIS PIGS.

It was but a moment, and that moment one of intense sorrow. Susan, scarcely a bride, received the farewell kiss of her husband, and, with eyes almost blinded with tears, saw the Thames under weigh, the fresh breeze blowing her from the anchorage, and, if as eager to leave the shore behind, every stitch she could carry crowded upon her. Susan thought she saw a white handkerchief waving over the taffrail, and she waved her own as a signal to him she dearly loved, that his last adieu was seen. She then returned to her melancholy lodgings, and that evening was on her road to Mrs. Talbot's.

Cornish forgot the whole business of duel and fighting in the notice of action served by Clasp. And so wholly was his mind bent upon defending this action, and of ruining poor Boniface, that when he met Susan at Mrs. Talbot's, he seemed quite to forget she was married, and held out his hand as if Susan would receive that English token of friendship without hesitation.

The frigate to which Curlew was appointed was soon ready for sea, and sailed for Jamaica.

No sooner had the Thames reached the Downs than she received orders from the Admiralty to repair to Gibraltar without the smallest delay. Bowling scribbled a few lines to Susan, in which he regretted his destination, as he was again prevented from serving under Lord Nelson. The Thames was now seen flying down channel; and on the 28th of June, 1801, she made her signal to the Cæsar, which ship bore the flag of Rear-Admiral Sir James Saumarez. Sir James was stationed off Cadiz, and had with him six sail of the line.

The Thames was desired to keep company with the Admiral; and Bowling found himself in a frigate condemned to tack and wear, and go through the horrible monotonous life of a captain in a fleet. It is the independence which generally belongs to a captain of a frigate that makes his

life so pleasurable. He is generally free from control, sent to cruise by himself, and has no one to rob him of his credit in the event of an action. Bowling's ship soon attracted the notice of the Admiral. She was the smartest vessel in the squadron, and there never was seen on board of her any loose ropes, sails badly set, or wet clothes hung up out of sight of the quarter-deck, but visible to other vessels; neither was she deficient in gunnery. The whole world was at war, and sooner or later Bowling knew he should have to try his strength and discipline against an adversary.

Only four days had elapsed, and these four days seemed like years to Bowling and his officers, when the squadron were enlivened by the sight of a despatch-boat, which had been sent from the Calpé, then at Gibraltar. A signal for a lieutenant from each ship was soon seen flying from the Cæsar's mastheads, and the order book was soon delivered to Bowling. The fleet was desired to be kept in readiness for instant service; and then there was a shout of joy, which demonstrated how very fond men were of the prospect of cutting the throats of others. The news soon got about the fleet that Admiral Linois had been seen in the Straits of Gibraltar. The Minorca packet had fallen into his hands; and the Speedy, under the

command of Lord Cochrane, was captured. These little disasters were not unwelcome, as they confirmed the news of the French Admiral's vicinity, and the order demonstrated Sir James Saumarez's intention of trying his strength, insignificant as it might appear, against him.

The Thames's signal was now made to look out in that direction; and the squadron tacked off shore with the intention of standing over towards the rock. Early the next morning the Thames saw a boat standing towards her; she was another despatch-boat, which brought the intelligence that the French Admiral had anchored off Algeziras; then came those signals which put the intentions of the Admiral out of all doubt. "Prepare for battle" was hardly answered before it was superseded by another, "and for anchoring by the stern." The Admiral then bore up with a moderate breeze from the northward and westward; but a gloom soon came over all hands as the wind died away, and the squadron were swept by the strength of the current to the eastward.

"It cannot always be calm," said Bowling, who, though excessively annoyed, was still apparently cool; "and if we can't get near them, they are equally unable to get further off from us, so we may make our minds easy. It is only a pleasure deferred."

Lanyard, who longed for the action and the epaulette, was not quite so philosophical, and cursed the clerk of the weather up in heaps; whilst the other officers, all desperately eager for the fray, wondered why so useless a clerk, who evidently did not know his business, was not cashiered.

A light breeze came on at 4 P.M., and thus proved the truth of Bowling's remark—"that it is never calm long where there is a current." The ships soon crowded all their canvas. At dayligh in the morning of the 6th of July, the squadron were near Cape Tariffa; and at 7, the leading ship, the Venerable, opened Cabrita Point, and made the signal for the French ships being in sight.

"All right, Mr. Lanyard," observed Bowling, as he looked at the signal-book; "there they are, snugly entrapped. We shall soon see them, and be at them also. Is everything ready?"

The answer may be anticipated. In a well-ordered ship everything is ready, and one minute is sufficient time to repair an oversight. Bowling visited the quarters himself; he saw the preparations complete for the anchoring by the stern. And scarcely had he made his visit of inspection than he observed the signal at the Cæsar's mastheads "for engaging the enemy on arriving up with him in succession."

“Is there no officer in the ship,” said Bowling, “who has been here before?”

A dozen answered, “I have, sir.”

“Do you know anything about this anchorage?”

Not one had been at anchor off Algeziras.

“I know,” says one, “there are lots of sunken rocks, or the Frenchman would as soon have thought of anchoring in the Atlantic. There’s lots of guns also. Let’s see,” said this young man; “there’s the Fort Santa Garcia; there’s a battery on the Isla Verda; there’s San Jago; and there’s the Tower of Almirante; and all along the northern shore of Gibraltar Bay there are forts; but they could only do mischief by shells. It’s the inland batteries, and the flanking position of San Jago, which forms the principal protection to the roadstead—”

“The Frenchman seems to have taken every precaution,” said Bowling, addressing the master; “he has availed himself of the assistance of all these batteries, and has warped himself close in shore, with all the rocks outside to catch us as we come in; and those gun-boats, although too despicable to be numbered, may be as annoying as a musquito on the toughest skin!”

It is almost impossible to select a worse place than Gibraltar for the manœuvring of a fleet. One moment it is a dead calm; the next a strong

breeze; then a partial squall, and then a momentary light breeze;—there is no place more dangerous for boat sailing; and accidents are as common as oranges. There is scarcely a ship that ever anchored that got away with all her anchors safe. And this must account for the straggling order of the English fleet. At 7. 50., A.M. the *Pompie*, with a fresh breeze, rounded Cabrita Point; the *Venerable*, the intended leading ship, lay becalmed on her starboard bow; whilst the *Cæsar*, the flag ship, with two other ships, were at least three miles astern, vainly endeavouring to get up.

The signal having been made to engage, as the ships closed with the enemy, the *Pompie* opened the action at half-past eight; and right well she exhibited her powers of destruction; for the French ships, disliking even this single ship, warped further in shore.

The baffling winds made the action doubtful, which otherwise would have been a certainty. The *Audacious*, and the *Venerable*, had succeeded in getting up to the assistance of the *Pompie*, and the action became quite entertaining to those who were not engaged in it. The fire was hot and annoying; the three British ships had four French ships, some gun-boats, and all the batteries, to contend against. The *Pompie* had been in the execution line for three-quarters of an hour before

the Cæsar got into action ; and, owing to the baffling wind, Captain Bowling had the satisfaction of understanding the real meaning of the word "mortification." There they were hard at work, the engines of death and destruction in high force. And yet Bowling could not even enjoy the gratification of being fired at. He was out of reach even of shells. The boats were ahead, and every exertion was made ; but it was half an hour more before the first-lieutenant most fervently returned thanks because a shell had fallen outside of them.

"It's all that old Jonas's luck," said a midshipman. "He's been a lieutenant ever since Adam was an oakum boy in Chatham Yard !"

"No, your honour," said O'Leary, who had followed his Captain, and not his wife, "it's all owing to the black cat—bad luck to me if ever any thing good happened to a man who had a black cat or a parson on board."

In the meantime never was English gallantry more conspicuous than on this day. The *Pompie* fought and fired as if she was manned by thousands, and had as many guns as Noah's Ark could have carried ; but she was in an awfully perilous situation. The *Hannibal* was sent to her assistance ; but the *Hannibal* grounded. She had been conducted in the most masterly, the most gallant

style ; but the sunken rock had caught the keel, and in spite of all endeavours, the ship remained hard and fast.

This morning's amusement now became so disagreeable, that Admiral Linois made the signal for his part of the combatants to cut their cables and run ashore. A very worthy design, but not so easily executed ; for the wind which had baffled the Hannibal, and had but partially assisted the Cæsar, came at this moment to the assistance of the English. The French cut their cables in obedience to the signal ; but the light air baffled them so much that the Formidable anchored again. The Desaix grounded on a shoal in front of the town, and the Indomptable upon the north-east point of the Isla Verda.

The breeze, having now done its worst for the French, freshened for the assistance of the English ; and Sir James Saumarez made the signal for the fleet to cut, and take advantage of the enemy's state. The Cæsar hove to upon the bows of the Indomptable, and poured in her heavy and destructive broadsides. The other ships imitated this good example ; whilst boats were sent to tow out the gallant Pompie, which ship had remained nearly an hour unable to fire a gun. The wind, fresh one moment and calm the next, now deserted the English, and left the Cæsar and the Audacious

to the mercy of the Spanish batteries. And whilst for a moment the spirit of the gallant Admiral surmounted all difficulties in imagination, the painful reality of his position was manifested to him—he was drifting on a reef; the Hannibal was a prize—aground.

At half past one the action ceased, leaving the Hannibal as a trophy in the hands of the enemy; but not until all resistance was unavailing—not until it was criminal continuing an action in which hope could not afford the slightest ray. She was left aground; her companions had relinquished the contest; her guns were nearly all disabled; the fore and main-mast were shot away, and great numbers of the crew were killed or wounded. Although nothing could surpass the cool gallantry of the English, and no manœuvre, which the skill of experienced seamen could suggest, was left untried, the result did not equal the expectations of the gallant Admiral who planned and endeavoured to execute the attack. It was a splendid failure; the numerous casualties, more especially on board the Cæsar and the Pompey, shew how desperately this battle was fought. In the latter ship, there was not a mast, yard, spar, shroud, rope, or sail, but was more or less injured. The main-mast of the Cæsar was shot through in five

places, and all her other masts and yards were wounded in a greater or less degree.

It was in this action (in which Bowling, from the variable winds and occasional calm, was unable to take a very conspicuous part) that Bowling began to see that all attempts at dashing—as it is called—are not successful, and that prudence or discretion are the better parts of valour. Here were many lives sacrificed, and no good gained ;—here was a large and valuable line-of-battle ship captured, whilst the enemy remained in security under their batteries. The very failure of success to us, was a victory to them. And in Paris, such was the enthusiasm our disappointment occasioned, that the theatres were thrown open to the public, and the city illuminated. This, however, is no criterion of Gallic success ; for the same symptoms of rejoicing took place after the battle of Trafalgar.

Even Bowling, although a young post-captain, could not fail to observe that attacks against a fleet or squadron, moored under the protection of numerous batteries, can seldom promise much chance of success if the wind is adverse. It is perhaps easy enough to get in ; but the difficulty is to get out. Had not the land-breeze come most opportunely to the aid and succour of the English fleet at Algiers, the result might, and would, have

been very different. With fresh breezes *off* the shore, if you can fetch the anchorage, the retreat is certain; and the surgeon of the Thames remarked to his captain that there was some similarity between a naval action and a fox-hunt. Every good sportsman, directly he gets into a difficult field, looks eagerly for a place to get out again—a hint not thrown away upon our hero in after-times.

“Well, O’Leary,” said the doctor, when the frigate stood over to Gibraltar, “what do you think of this affair?”

“I’m thinking, sir, that I’d be mighty glad if Mrs. O’Leary had been amongst the killed, in her right place—the Audacious!”

“Oh, never mind her, my good fellow,” said the doctor; “you’ll never see any more of her.”

“By my faith, I’m very unlike the generality of husbands. I saw a mighty deal more of Mrs. O’Leary—(bad luck to the day I ever shipped that handle to her name!)—before my marriage, than ever I did afterwards. And there she is my wife, and living with another man!”

“Lord bless you!” said the doctor, who was just looking through the glass and saw the Hannibal strike her colours, “he’s struck her this moment!”

“Is she there, your honour?” said O’Leary, jumping like a wild cat. “By my faith, he may strike her until her head’s as big as a puncheon!”

Oh, if those French officers will only take her under their protection, she'd be dead in law, or d—d ; and right well I know what I'd make of those letters, if the clerk wants another brace of words for 'discharged—dead—'

The doctor paid no attention to O'Leary ; he was watching the French boats pulling out to take charge of their prize. And every time the doctor, in his fighting mood, "damned her," meaning the Hannibal, O'Leary quietly and respectfully remarked, "The same blessing to her anyway !"

It is in vain to picture the scene of slaughter after an action, or point out all the horrors of war in cool blood. During the moment of excitement, men do strange and desperate things ; but when the affair is finished, and they contemplate the numbers of their friends dead, or wounded, and they see for what trivial objects such hecatombs are slaughtered, they are apt to ask themselves, if the attempt was worth the loss. And in what does the magic of the words "national honour" and "glory" actually consist ? The young and the enthusiastic are all for war ; those grown more sage by years and experience are, on the contrary, for peace and plenty. They see no glory in the sacrifice of their brethren, and wonder how a people can be such fools and dolts as to *allow* their rulers to shed their blood at discretion at the mag-

nificent price of a shilling a day. Even Bowling, now he was married, had some misgivings, which, had the event in which he had been engaged been successful, would never have occurred. Such it ever is; we are flushed by victory; but a little reverse wonderfully cools the martial spirit.

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH THERE IS A MURDER, AND AN UNDISTURBED GRAVE, WITH NO TOMBSTONE TO WARN OTHER FOOLS.

WHEN Lord Seagull took leave of his bird of similar plumage, Curlew, he gave him a hint that although the *parvenus* sometimes gained rank, they seldom gained stars and honours, best exhibited in a drawing-room, and where every beautiful eye gazes with admiration, and every tongue asks—"To whom do they belong?" "Go, Curlew—go, my boy; anything shall ensure you 'an order.' Do something desperate! You understand—let others fight, the reward will be yours; for every star worn on the coat of either admiral or general a score of other men's lives have been

sacrificed. The glory does not exist in being killed for one's country, but in getting others to be killed for your glory. Remember *that*, and keep your temper."

The last portion of the advice might as well have been omitted. Curlew could not keep his temper. He was naturally a haughty, proud fool, who believed all the world his plaything, and that his pretensions to nobility must be omnipotent. He soon evinced his desire to tyrannize, and his incompetency to command. He was one of those niggling, annoying, fretful officers, who, from want of method, always keep their officers and men on the tenter-hooks of uncertainty. Everything was begun; nothing was ever properly finished. There was no regularity in any design, and still less in its execution. Punishments were frequent, discontent universal; and one or two outbreaks of mutiny, which, from the vigilance of the first-lieutenant, were fortunately nipped in the bud, only led to severer punishments, the cause of the discontent not being removed by any alteration in the commanding officer.

At his table Captain Curlew was the same proud man; and in any private conversation, a circumstance very rare in his ship, he always enacted king, and was as difficult of approach as a weak monarch guarded by a clever minister.

Everything was costly and approaching to magnificence in regard to his table; and here alone he seemed above the narrow notion of limiting the wine of his guests to a pint, that being the quantum it was generally supposed in those times in the navy a man might carry without rolling and pitching with the ship; but the conversation was cold and constrained, generally confined to the qualities of the frigate, the heat of the weather, that never-resting death stalker, the yellow fever, or actions of other vessels. He never indulged in any anecdotes of the shore, or encouraged them in others; but exhibited a demeanour of chilling haughtiness, repulsive, unfriendly, and unseasonable.

When he dined with his officers, which he always did every Sunday, more from the practice of the service than from any regard to them, a wet blanket could not more efficaciously have smothered a fire than did his presence the most trivial approach to hilarity. It was a party of men who wagged their under jaws, and whose tongues smacked against their palates—not to talk, but to taste. He scarcely remained a quarter of an hour after the cloth was removed before he removed himself in the most dignified manner; and as his delicate constitution could not stand strong port, he used to recline on his after-sofa, and in the cool

breeze sip his cooler claret. There is some luxury on board a ship when money is abundant; but Curlew evidently thought, as does to this day a celebrated French Baron, who, having asked a friend of his how long he had been in the navy, was answered, "For nearly fifteen years of my life I have been afloat, and actually at sea."

"Then you are," replied the Baron, "a greater fool from the want of fifteen years' experience, pleasure, and worldly knowledge, than any other man in the room." Rather a startling fact, most uncomfortably communicated, and which certainly had never occurred to the hapless wight of a half-pay captain before.

Curlew's evenings were passed in solitary grandeur. Wine, that consoler of the unfortunate and prop of the melancholy, was always at hand; but he was in this respect a gentleman, and he took that delicious nectar, cool claret, in moderation; nor could his worst enemy ever call him a drunkard. Sometimes he opened a book; but the exertion was destructive to study, so he would doze on his sofa, look over his order-book, inquire of his steward concerning certain wines, and then, as driven from himself, he would walk on deck to give his last orders.

There was no female heart that beat responsive to his. Love never cheered him with the sweet

prospect of return. He cared very little for his father ; his mother was dead ; and there was not one man throughout the globe who cared a straw, with the exception, perhaps, of his servant, if Capt. Curlew was to be hung, drawn, and quartered the next minute. He never knew the value of the greatest earthly blessing—"a friend." He followed the advice of the dramatist—the world was his oyster, and he could open it at discretion. The frigate was now on the Jamaica station, and it is on such stations that the kindly feeling of a captain can best be exercised in favour of his officers. There are a thousand kind acts in hot climates which can increase the very little comfort to be enjoyed in a ship, where the heat is so overpowering and oppressive.

No sooner was the frigate on the station than the most vexatious annoyances began, in which the men suffered more than the officers. The wind-sails were deemed unsightly things, and not one was allowed ; so that below the ship was like an oven. Instead of leaving the hammocks of the watch on deck in the nettings, so as to allow more space for those below, every hammock was obliged to be hung up ; and the most rigid order existed, that no one should be allowed to lie about the deck.

In the day-time, even in the heat of the day, the ship's company would be practised at the guns, or

at reefing top-sails, whilst the captain was in his cool cabin. But these were minor annoyances. The allowance of water was frequently reduced, upon the pretence that the ship might be at sea longer than was expected ; and this grievance, although respectfully stated by the ship's company as the worst they could experience, met with no redress. There was a black list for small offences, and this was always crowded with names. The victims of unlicensed oppression were kept at work somehow almost all day, and it was quite immaterial to their oppressor if it took place in the sun or in the shade. Punishments were frequent, almost daily ; and every officer wished himself out of the ship, as every seaman was prepared to desert. It was the success of several men at Jamaica in this respect which rendered Curlew more morose than ever. He was himself desperately idle ; and we know that all idle people are vicious. Annoyances to others gave him some occupation and some amusement ; and no cat, with a half-killed mouse, ever tormented the poor victim within its claws more than did the discontented, morose, idle Curlew, his officers and ship's company.

The first lieutenant had heard some murmurs loudly expressed—not in songs on the fore-castle, for singing was prohibited on board of this aristocratic floating pandemonium—but in plain speech,

and rather louder than was consistent with discipline.

“What do we do but work and thirst,” said one, “whilst he sleeps in his cabin and drinks when he is thirsty?” And another, whilst being flogged, told the captain that he might cut him to pieces, for he would quite as soon die as serve under such a tyrant. There was a slight murmur of applause when this speech was delivered ; but no one could be detected, for all more or less approved of it. That poor wretch was cast off, and had both legs placed in irons. He was to be tried at a court-martial for mutiny, and was told by his captain that if he had any influence, he, the culprit, should dangle at the fore-yard-arm. One or two of the men, when he was cast off, said, “Never mind, Tom ; you won’t be long in irons, and the fore-yard arm may have better company.” This rather startled Curlew, who foamed at the mouth because he could not detect the speakers ; and he swore he would flog every man in the ship from the open list, unless the mutinous scoundrel was discovered. The marines were now ordered to load with ball cartridge, and to be ready, if necessary, to charge the seamen.

“Spit them,” said Curlew, in his rage, “like so many sparrows. I’ll teach you, you mutinous vagabonds, to dare to murmur at what I say or do.” Scarcely had he finished this beautiful specimen of

oriental despotism, when a small ball of rope-yarn was thrown from the dense mass of seamen, and hit the captain in the face.

It was now evident enough that a mutiny existed. The officers all had on their side-arms ; and the first lieutenant rushed into the thickest of the men, in order to seize the culprit. The men opened for him on both sides ; and he heard distinctly, "Don't hurt him ; he can't help it ; he's a good one."

The master, who was a bold fellow with a cool head, approached the captain, and in a low voice advised him to "pipe down," in order that the officers might get some fire-arms ; but the prudent advice was coldly received, and not acted upon : but on the return of the first lieutenant it was again suggested, and then complied with. The marines were kept under arms, and the sentinels at the cabin and gun-room doors were doubled, a small detachment being kept on the main deck, with orders to disperse any group of men.

Curlew could not credit either his ears or his eyes ; and instead of at once calling the officers together and warning them of the necessity of being armed, and then of inquiring the cause of complaint in order to remedy it, he retired to his cabin, sent for the master, and desired him to shape a course for Jamaica. He then desired the first lieutenant to turn the hands up to reef top-sails,

and whilst the men were aloft to have the marines under arms, and seize all those most suspected.

It was done. The men, as usual, flew aloft; and when on the yards reefing, the marines were placed, and about twenty of the worst characters were called down, and were put in irons; some were lashed to ring-bolts; and four were secured to the after part of the booms. They all submitted without a murmur, and the calm silence of the rest convinced Curlew he had by this active measure secured obedience.

As yet it was doubtful if any regular, organized plan existed on board; for the men had never grouped together, as is generally observed before there is any outbreak. Each appeared to shun the other; they passed each other with sullen looks in positive silence; and the ship was like a vast grave, with ghosts gliding about.

The men were well aware that the course had been altered, and that they were returning to Jamaica. The sea-breeze blew fresh, and the next evening they would make the Blue Mountains. At sunset the wind went down a little; the men were mustered at their quarters; and the reef taken in was now mended. Everything was executed with alacrity; it was impossible even for Curlew to find fault; the watch was called as usual; and even the first lieutenant congratulated

himself that the active measures already taken would damp any disposition to positive mutiny, before the ship got back to Port Royal.

Curlew was the least apprehensive of any. He thought, with the Persian tyrant mentioned by Morier in *Zohrab*, that the words, "I am the Schah," would still even an insurrection, and stop the murderer's hand. He sat down as usual, and watched the silvery wake of his frigate; and so confident was he in his security that he never gave additional orders for vigilance, but, as usual, sipped his claret, and wrapped himself up in the mantle of his own greatness. His steward loitered more than was necessary in his cabin, which at last he noticed in his kindest tone, "What the devil are you doing there all this time?"

"I was waiting, sir, to know if I am to place your pistols in the cot."

Some strange fancy came over the captain to condescend a little, and he continued by asking the question, "Why do you fancy I require the pistols to-night, steward?"

"After what has happened to-day, sir," said the man, "I thought you might wish to have them."

"Indeed! and pray, steward, do you think the precaution requisite?"

"Indeed I do, sir; and if I might make so bold as to speak, I think I could convince you of the necessity of being prepared."

“Speak out like a man,” said Curlew, filling his glass.

“There’s some disturbance plotting about the ship, sir.”

“How do you know?”

“Because the men are so quiet, sir.”

“And is quiet and orderly behaviour a sign of discontent?”

“They say, sir, it’s always unnaturally calm before a hurricane; and I suspect that the doctor is right when he remarks, that men more or less follow nature in everything.”

“None of your doctor’s remarks if you please, sir; have you nothing else to say?”

“Nothing, sir, but this: that I have been your steward in every ship you have been in, and I never knew one in such a state as this is. Not one of the men will speak to me, sir; and I’m only doing my duty to you, sir, in praying you to be alive to-night.”

There was something in the steward’s manner that even alarmed the aristocratic dignity of Curlew. “Speak out, steward,” he said; “if you have served me so long, and never left me, I cannot be very frightful in your eyes. What have you heard?”

“I have not heard anything, sir; but I have seen the men pass each other making the same signs, and a sailor never makes signals excepting when the wind’s likely to change. I’ve been with you now, sir, many a cruize; and although there was

some discontent on board the brig when we left off the chase of that frigate——”

“Never mind that, steward,” said Curlew, rather disgusted at any remark which, by any possibility, could have allusion to Bowling; “go on.”

“I was going to say, sir, that that was nothing to this morning’s work.”

“You’re a fool,” said Curlew, who never before had indulged in so protracted a conversation. “You may go to bed; I shall not want you any more to-night.”

“I hope you won’t, sir; indeed I do.”

“Tell the officer of the watch to come to me.”

The steward departed; the officer appeared. “Is everything quiet in the ship?”

“Everything, sir. The midshipman of the watch has just gone the rounds, and has reported that he never knew the ship more quiet.”

“Enough, sir,” interrupted Curlew, who made a dignified inclination of the head, which is known under the description of “bowing out.”

With all these assurances, and with the double guard at his door, Curlew felt uneasy; and yet, considering there was no real apprehension, as the ship gallantly pursued her course, and on the following morning in all probability she would meet some other cruizer, and then he could have protection from her, if requisite, not troubling himself by

the muttering of any prayer, he threw himself into his cot and was soon asleep. At midnight the watch was relieved. Everything appeared as usual; the men mustered on the lee side, and as they answered they passed over to windward before the capstan, and went forward. The officer of the first watch was in conversation with his successor for the four hours' tramp, when they overheard the quick repetition of the word, "Now—now—now." They had been leaning over the weather gangway, and, on turning round, they found that between them and the capstan some twenty or thirty seamen were congregated; and before they could force their way aft they were both seized, their hands lashed behind them, their legs secured, and their mouths gagged.

"Overboard with them at once, Bill," said a boatswain's mate, who was evidently the ringleader. "Cast adrift those prisoners! Come, look sharp!"

Before any struggle could be made, or any assistance afforded, the mutineers advanced; the two lieutenants were seized in their rude arms; and, as their lips vainly attempted to implore mercy, a heavy splash was heard, and the deep and silent sea engulfed them. The ship soon left the place where these two innocent men were committed to their secret graves, and no friendly voice ever offered

a prayer for their eternal repose. It was the work of little more than a moment, though the consummation of a well-digested plan. They were unresistingly seized, and swung backwards and forwards three times, when one man called out, "Launch oh!" and the murder was completed.

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH IS SHEWN THE DANGER AND CONSEQUENCES OF
PROMOTING UNFIT PEOPLE TO COMMANDS.

THE tyranny and the ignorance of Curlew had left the men little else to do than to die themselves, or to hand over their officers to a similar fate. Of the whole ship's company not ten would have opposed the mutiny; and even some of the marines, generally the most faithful and loyal corps in any service, had given their consent, and now aided and abetted in the work of destruction. The midshipmen of the watch were gagged and taken forward as prisoners, whilst one of the mates, striving, by a loud cry, to awake the officers below, was stopped in his laudable endeavours by being pre-

cipitated headlong over the taffrail, and instantly drowned.

Before any further proceedings were taken, the ship was hauled to the wind on the larboard tack, and all sail set to gain the coast anywhere between Santa Martha and Maracaibo. This alteration of the course with the sudden heeling of the ship to starboard awoke the captain, and ever ready when awake to annoy, or to cause alarm, he rang his bell. The sentinel at the cabin-door was one of the marines who had joined the mutineers; without the least hesitation he entered and answered the bell by saying, "Sir?"

"Tell the officer of the watch I want him," said Curlew.

"Yes, sir," said the sentinel.

The boatswain's mate, who now commanded the ship in reality, was in no manner disposed to spoil his revenge by at once getting the captain on deck, and committing him to the deep. He knew that all the men were faithful to the plan about to be executed; and therefore, without being alarmed at the summons, he ordered about ten men to go to the cabin door, and there remain quite quiet, only securing the captain in the event of his endeavouring to force his way on deck. A large detachment of the crew now went below, and every officer of the ship was secured in a few minutes without the

slightest resistance ; for so well was it arranged that every one of them were made prisoners at the same moment.

Again the cabin bell rang violently.

"He is in a hurry to die," said the boatswain's mate ; "but I'm not in such a hurry to part with him."

"Did you tell the officer of the watch I desired to speak to him ?" exclaimed the captain angrily, on the marine again making his appearance.

"Yes, sir," said the sentinel.

"Tell him to come to me instantly, or by the—"

His oath was cut short by the sentinel banging the door in a manner so very disrespectful that the bell was rung about a dozen times in one continued peal. It was about this time the officers were all seized below ; and although one or two made a great exertion to raise their voices, and the captain decidedly must have heard the noise, little as it was, no alarm was created in his mind.

The boatswain's mate now descended, with the sentinel and three other men. The bell was ringing violently, and that prognosticated a stormy reception.

The door was opened, and the captain called out, "Where is the officer of the watch ? Put that sentry into the report ; I'll teach him to bang my door in that manner. Where is the officer of the watch, I say ?"

“Overboard,” said the boatswain’s mate, with the utmost coolness, “where you will be when we have tried you for your cruelty.”

The captain leaped into an upright position, but he was instantly seized; and in spite of his vociferations and his assertions he was rudely pinioned like a felon, as he called out, “I am your captain! Release me this instant, or you shall all swing, like dogs, to the fore-yard-arm.”

“We will take very good care you never witness against us. You might have slept until daylight, and had your last night’s rest undisturbed, but that your rage and your noisy bell made us obey your summons.”

“I am your captain, you mutinous scoundrels,” cried Curlew, boiling with impotent rage. “Unhand me! Unlash me, I say; or not one of you shall live a week after our arrival at Port Royal. I’ll flog you all! Williams, you mutinous vagabond, unleash my hands, I say!”

“Don’t make such a hullabaloo,” said one of the men. “We are not going to give you a swim yet; the weather’s too hot for a bath. Damn me! but I’ll pay you to-morrow for the four dozen you gave me yesterday.”

“Captain Curlew,” said the boatswain’s mate, “I wish to make you as comfortable as I can between this hour and your court-martial; and you are the

man to choose between being gagged with a pump-bolt, or being left to breathe freely. Take your choice ; if you speak again, the bolt you put into Williams's mouth the other day will go into yours."

They say that many a man, who in perfect health when led to execution, has expressed his conviction that he could not die : he could not believe it possible. So Curlew, although pinioned, and in every way "cabinued, cribbed, confined," could not believe that his word, which had six hours before been obeyed with readiness, should now be scoffed at and ridiculed. Again he mentioned that he was their captain, and called upon them by name to release him ; and even then the boatswain's mate saw how much weight his order still had, by the wavering of one of his followers. He sent him for the pump-bolt and two stout yarns.

"You would keep your word, I know, if you were free," said the boatswain's mate ; "and I'll keep mine, you may depend upon it. Gag him !"

Although Curlew was pinioned, few could imagine the resistance he made against the introduction of the bolt into his mouth. He kept his teeth firmly set together ; and in spite of the painful operation of rubbing the iron to and fro against his gums, he resolutely remained determined to resist the indignity.

"Knock his teeth out, Williams ! I can't stand

here all night about such trifles." Williams used the pointed part of the bolt, and forced the mouth open; the bolt was pulled back and tied behind his head, fixing it in the mouth like the bit in that of a horse, when the rider is as savage as the horse is restive.

"There!" said the boatswain's mate; "you're quieted at last. Now go to sleep, or say your prayers, whichever you like best! Come along, lads! Sentry, this is your charge; and take care how you do your duty."

There was no duty that could be more grateful to the marine; for there was no language he did not apply, and no annoyance to which he did not resort, or any indignity he did not commit. He spat in his face; and tried how his captain could stand pain, by applying the point of his bayonet occasionally to his bare flesh.

If words could have killed him, he would have died; for never did man suffer more. Not Suffolk, before his head was lopped off on the pinnace side by unmannerly hinds and pirates, ever felt more the force of words when uttered by one so lowly, so despicably born, than did Curlew, as the marine taunted him with his tyranny, and struck him in defiance, as he said, of the articles of war or the sentence of a court-martial.

On deck the work of death had been busily car-

ried on. All the officers but the master had been given, as one ruffian said, to feed their betters, the sharks; and those voracious devils are never far from a ship in those seas. The captain alone was reserved for further indignities, and for a protracted death.

The crew was now mustered on deck, and every man swore to be true to the cause; but when men engage in unlawful pursuits sleep never comes with its refreshing power, but is caught at intervals, and only becomes sound for the few minutes which excessive fatigue may force. The ringleader was afraid to close his eyes; and each man, excepting one or two who had found their way to the afterhold, and who had tumbled into a drunken sleep, felt that his throat was not safe if his eyes were closed.

So passed the night; and it is needless to picture the torture of mind endured by all. Curlew felt all the mortification of a nobleman subjected to the rude revenge of an ignorant, low-minded mob. The mutineers had no security that each man would not rise against his neighbour, prompted by the hope that thus he might obtain a pardon. Nothing but the determined revenge which animated them against the victim in the cabin, kept them together in spirit; for there are always some unsteady of purpose, who are troubled with thought and con-

science, and who, having commenced an illegal act, flinch from its continuance.

At daylight there was a large ship on the weather quarter, under all sail, standing apparently in pursuit of them. The frigate immediately crowded all the canvas she could carry, whilst the ship astern, observing this disposition to escape, continued the chase. She was out of signal distance, and therefore, for the present, out of all power of molestation.

It was in daylight that the ship's company took the repose generally gained from the night; and it was eight o'clock before all hands were awake, and inclined to terminate the tragedy they had so successfully begun. In the mean time the frigate astern had gained considerably upon them. They now piped to breakfast, and sent the captain's steward, under the surveillance of one or two of the most resolute mutineers, to dress the captain in his full-dress uniform, ready to attend the court; and as the eye of the steward met those of his captain, he fully comprehended what his master required. They dressed him carefully, nay even shaved him, and bestowed scrupulous attention upon his hair, but the bolt was never taken from his mouth; and no sooner was his toilet completed than he was handcuffed, his useless sword was buckled to his side, and before the mutineers stood the man, power-

less and disrespected, who a day before had never been approached but with awe and trembling.

When the ship's company had breakfasted they assembled on the quarter-deck ; the awnings were spread, and some planks were placed, resting upon the carronade slides for seats. The scene resembled the preparations for the church service on board a ship. All hands sat down, and a chair was brought for the boatswain's mate near the capstan. On the drum-head were placed the cats, which had been so liberally used upon almost every man then present ; and there was, throughout the whole ceremony, a marked attention and respect, very different from what might have been expected in a vessel in such a state, and which had not broken out into rebellion more than nine hours. Before the captain was brought on deck the ship's company was mustered, and only nine or ten were missing. These were all drunk below ; but directly it was discovered the after-hold was battened down, and some of the most trustworthy were placed as sentinels about the decks.

The boatswain's mate, who had thus arrived at the very unenviable distinction of chief mutineer, had been formerly an attorney's clerk, and was a man who had a far better education than that which was generally reckoned as sufficient for fifty able seamen. Education does not always make people

better, or more moral. Every disturbance on record, which had disgraced the navy, has always been set on foot, and generally carried into execution, by the best educated man on board. It is this education which teaches the ignorant that union is force, and which suggests to the ignorant the means of revenging an imagined wrong. It strips a dress of the respect believed due to it, and points the shaft of ridicule where respect concealed ignorance.

The boatswain's mate addressed his crew, for he was as absolute as a monarch, and had already got a chair for a throne. He told them in a few words, that his design was to carry the ship to Puerto Caballo, to deliver her to the Spaniards, and to set up, with the price he expected to receive for this laudable action, as a Spanish grandee. He then drew an animated picture of liberty, and congratulated his slaves that they were free. One of the men ventured to remark, that the frigate astern evidently neared fast, and ventured to suggest that some means should be taken to avoid her if possible.

"Hold your tongue, you talking booby," said the boatswain's mate, "and mind your own business. I shall take such precautions as I think proper, and they will be sufficient to keep us clear of her or any one else; but I would recommend you to pay more respect to my opinion, and less to your own ability."

“ My lads,” he continued aloud, “ we are assembled here to try the Honourable William Curlew for conspiring against our liberties, and for having at various times been guilty of excessive tyranny. Shall I order the prisoner to be brought before you ?”

A general acclamation of “ Yes ” burst forth, and the master-at-arms and ship’s corporal were sent down for him. When brought on deck he looked pale and haggard, the consequence of a night of struggle and of torture; but he soon recovered his looks, and his eye seemed brighter than ever.

“ Take that bolt from his mouth,” said the boatswain’s mate. It was done. “ William Curlew,” said the new chief, “ you are brought here to be tried for your life by these men, formerly your inferiors, now your equals.”

“ Silence, you mutinous scoundrel !” said the captain. “ Hear me, you misguided, miserable wretches ! The deed you have done shall as certainly be visited upon you with the utmost penalty of the law as that I stand here. Sooner or later the fore-yard-arm awaits you all. Up, I say, and take off your hats to your captain !” There was a slight movement among the men, who feared the lion even in his toils, and who could not shake off the respect due to one placed in proper authority over

them. “*You*,” said the captain, addressing one in whom he observed this wavering, “remember I call upon you to seize that fellow in that chair, and confine him in irons.”

“Take that fellow away,” shouted the boatswain’s mate, pointing to the vacillating seaman; “he’s a fool. Now go on, William Curlew. Make any remark you like; and when you have satisfied yourself that your power is gone, your officers overboard, your ship captured, perhaps you will listen to me.”

“Release me of these handcuffs, you cowardly vagabonds, and you shall soon see that I do not fear a thousand such men, all guilty of a crime by which their lives are forfeited.”

“Proceed with the trial,” said the ringleader. Here several men were called, who enumerated many, many instances of oppression and tyranny, which had originated in Curlew’s ignorance, both of the duties of a seaman and of an officer. It was evident he had never learnt to obey, and thus was unfit for command; and, as might have been supposed, every one found his captain guilty. “Guilty,” said the boatswain’s mate: “a just sentence. ‘Vengeance is mine,’ said the Lord; we will transfer the power:” and this blasphemous allusion met with a smile from many. “Guilty, William Curlew; your judges—not a packed set

of fellows, with cocked hats, sitting round a table drawing caricatures whilst a sailor's life is in jeopardy; but men who, twelve hours ago, would have obeyed you to the sacrifice of their lives—these judges, I say, have found you guilty; and your sentence is——”

“Here's a ship on the weather bow, with a signal up,” exclaimed one of the mutineers.

All started in alarm but the boatswain's mate, who, taking a glass, made out the pendants of one of the Jamaica squadron. “It is the Surprise,” he said.

Curlew now made a desperate attempt to liberate himself by promises. He declared that those who rallied round him should be pardoned; that rewards for returning to their duty should be given them. He called upon them, in the name of their king, their country, their allegiance, to release him of his handcuffs and obey his orders.

“Stand away there,” shouted the ringleader; “keep him abaft the mizen-mast; he shall be where he has often placed others in disgrace. Go away, the rest of you. And now, Captain Curlew, I will revenge myself upon you, not by taking your life—I would not give a straw for that—but you yourself, your own rank, shall sacrifice you. You are the senior officer to that captain. Bring me the signal-book.”

The frigate's number was first made, which satisfied the Surprise, for they knew the frigate by sight; and when, as the Surprise bore up to send a boat on board of the senior officer's ship, the signal was hoisted by the boatswain's mate for the Surprise "to continue her course, and of there being no occasion to communicate," Curlew was brought to the gangway, and saw all his hopes vanish in air as the frigate, on observing the signal, hauled to the wind. Both ships hoisted their ensigns, and then hauled them down again.

"Look at her until your eyes ache. You once called me a stupid hound; this is not so badly done for one so badly educated!"

Double assurance followed the release from alarm, and double confidence was bestowed upon their new leader. His will was now the law; no murmur was likely to be raised against him. "That work is done," he said; "now for the other. What shall his sentence be?"

Many proposed that he should be stripped and punished, and some, in their eagerness, rigged the gratings; others were for starting him with ropes' ends; others for lashing him to ring-bolts in the hot, scorching sun; but all were for death. The indignity was too great; the death was certain. He stood free; and seeing the preparations for a disgrace ten thousand-fold worse than death itself,

Curlew leapt upon the taffrail, and, before he could be seized, threw himself overboard, and thus prevented another crime from being fastened on the memories of that wretched crew, who afterwards atoned for their crimes by the sacrifice of their lives.

CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE IS BETTER THAN A
POSITIVE WITNESS, AND A PRETTY WOMAN JUST AS AT-
TRACTIVE AS A FLAME BY NIGHT.

"I THINK, Mrs. Marsh," said the attorney, "that after I have told you that I am not come to execute a warrant against you, or to seize your furniture, or to hang your son, that you will leave off this hysterical nonsense, and answer me a few questions."

"Lord, sir, you did frighten me so somehow, for you said you were a lawyer!"

"Well, madam, and so I am."

"Don't say so, sir, pray don't! so nice a gentleman, and to have no hope of everlasting life! It's quite grievous to think how any person can go

into a profession which is, begging your pardon, sir, d—d beforehand.”

“ I really, my good lady, do not understand you !”

“ Oh, it’s too plain to be misunderstood. ‘ Woe unto thee, ye lawyers,’ it’s written in the Book of Life, and it must be true !”

The attorney smiled ; and seeing that he had to deal with an ignorant fanatic, assured her that those words only applied to barristers who were paid for lying, and for making the worse the better cause, thus making the rascal triumph over the honest man, and not to attorneys who honestly perform their duties, and who had no more to do with the bar than they had with the bench. Mrs. Marsh bowed her head, and thanked God fervently that her visitor had a chance of salvation, and immediately discontinued all approaches to hysterics, and became as reasonable as could be expected.

“ I come to ask you,” continued the attorney, “ about your poor daughter, who, I believe, never recovered the loss of her master’s child.”

Mrs. Marsh startled at the question. “ It is now many years, certainly twenty, since that affair happened, and never has my child been reasonable since.”

“ Can you tell me anything of the particulars ?

for, to tell you the truth, I think I have discovered this child."

The old lady gave a very pious ejaculation, which merged something between a prayer and a blessing.—"If it is discovered—oh my! what joy will come upon the poor old couple! You know, sir, it is written, 'Hope deferred maketh—'"

"Yes, madam, I know all that by heart, so do not waste our time with quotations."

"I've got the date down in my Bible; and this is all Betsy ever told us of it. It was a warm morning, and she placed the child on a seat in the shade, whilst she, contrary to her master's orders, went to pick a nosegay, which she thought would be grateful to her mistress. But you know, sir, it is written, 'We must not do evil that good may come of it;' and when she had got the flowers together, she went back to the seat, and she saw a man galloping away with the child on a white horse; and before she could alarm either her master or mistress, the man was out of sight."

The attorney remembered well that Hanson had stated in his last will, that the maid was making love to a man over a hedge, and therefore knew how much of Betsy's nosegay, and of the man and the grey horse, deserved credit.

"Pray, madam, did your daughter *always* tell the truth?"

The old lady was silent; the thought of her daughter's shame seemed to follow the question—and she always doubted the story herself.

“Did she never vary about this story? Did she never mention that Tom such-a-one was by, and she called him?”

“Yes, poor soul, she often wanders about it. Now and then she says, ‘Ah! William! it was owing to you I lost the child!’”

“Could I see her?” said the attorney.

“She is in the County Lunatic Asylum, and has been ever since the event.”

“Now, madam, what became of those Harrisons?”

“Lord, sir, is it not written, ‘A house divided against a house cannot but fall;’—the prop of the house was the child, the foundation, sir, was on sand, ‘and the storms blew and the winds arose—’”

“Yes, yes, my good woman, ‘and great was the fall thereof,’ no doubt in the world; but what became of them?”

“For five years they continued close here in the same cottage; but ‘the Lord tempered the breeze to the shorn lamb,’ and they lived to become thankful for his mercy. At last they sold the cottage and went into Devonshire, and there they live now.”

“Do you know whereabouts?”

“Not far from Exeter, I hear; but time has gone fast—and when they removed, the affair was partially forgotten; but I cannot forget it—for my daughter’s ruin, and her madness, remain for ever on the mind of her mother.”

The attorney condoled with the parent. It was evident from the word ‘ruin,’ that Hanson’s account of the transaction was correct, and that the girl had endeavoured to screen herself under the falsehood of the nosegay.

“Is your daughter sane enough to speak of the child?”

“Sometimes, sir. Sometimes she’ll talk by the hour of poor master Thomas; but then she flies off, and William is talked of. He offered to marry her afterwards; but who could let a mad woman marry?”

The conversation finished by the mother agreeing to see the daughter in the presence of the attorney. And in that interview the legal gentleman was quite satisfied he was on the right scent, and that he might return to London and report his proceedings; he gave a scriptural blessing in the house of the old lady, and this cheap gratification was to her the greatest remuneration she could desire. She trusted that the seeds of righteousness had not fallen upon barren ground,

and took the ban off the lawyer in spite of the words.

On his return to London he waited upon the German doctor, who, whilst he related his adventure, was busy mimicking him to the life, in order to create a roar of laughter at the first dinner-table he might frequent where the attorney was known. On comparing notes, they agreed to go to Exeter together, and, whatever it might cost, find out the family, and trace this sailor through the means of Susan. Her abode had been discovered by the German doctor, who had met Cornish at dinner in London, and who very kindly mentioned her beauty, omitting, for once, the general detraction which accompanied his knowledge of any lady, whether married or single.

There was a gleam of satisfaction upon the laughter-loving face of the doctor as he spoke of the joy the parents would experience, if they could ascertain that this stolen child was alive, and that they could, without doubt, establish his identity with the one lost by this careless nursery-maid.

It was not long before they started, two of the black graces, Physic and Law, both sufficiently noisome doses to counteract each other, in a gig, to drive down by easy stages to Exeter, to see the country at their leisure, and to relax a little from

the continual bore of professional business. But no two men ever travel together without some slight difference of opinion ; and the first arose from the perfect conviction on the mind of the doctor that he could drive better than his companion—a conviction not quite so strong in the mind of the attorney, and, apparently, a matter of no concern to the horse, who, being a very self-willed creature, did not care who held the reins, as he was not likely to mind any hint as to which way he ought to go. At starting, it seemed to know the road, and how to avoid anything it might meet ; but it swung its head about in a most independent style, and was quite insensible to any pulls or tugs, manifesting, however, a great disposition to resent any injury which might be inflicted upon it by the whip ; and on one occasion it was about, as the lawyer said, to give legal notice to quit.

“Never mind !” said the German, “there’s a great similarity between a man and a horse,—they both go a quick pace at first ; but as they get tired of the journey, they gradually slacken their friskiness, and tug on, the one through life, and the other through his daily task, quite content with saving themselves as much as possible.”

“Very pretty philosophy ; but I’ll trouble you to mind this donkey—for I have observed the

horse has a strange dislike to those patient animals, and always shies at their approach."

The attorney became very nervous as they neared the neddy; and the face was much too good for the doctor to lose. He had got his eyes fixed on his companion, and his face so similar, that no one passing by could have recognised one from the other: mimicry was much more pleasant than carefulness. The attorney was right; the horse would shy. He caught hold of the reins to keep the gig clear of a wheelbarrow; the nervous twitch was irresistible; and the law and the physic were both nearly ejected without much notice, hardly being, as the attorney remarked, tenants-at-will. This brought on a dispute about who was the best coachman, until the attorney, looking his friend suddenly in the face, could not refrain from bursting out into a roar of laughter as he saw his own face exactly. It was impossible, if he had ever looked in a glass, that he could have completely forgotten his features. And now he certainly did not require a glass.

At the different places at which they stopped, the doctor invariably caused some ridicule to be attached to a neighbour who could not comprehend why he should be the object of laughter. And on the finish of the second day's journey, after seeing their obstinate horse better taken care

of than it deserved, they went to the coffee-room and ordered a dinner. It was at one of those moderate inns where carriage company are seldom seen ; but, like most English inns, clean and comfortable.

Of all horrible contrivances, the separations in a coffee-room are the worst. They give a kind of melancholy air to the room ; and from their sombre appearance, seem to indicate to those who occupy them, that their voices ought not to be heard beyond the green curtain which tops the divisions. In one of these boxes sat the doctor and the attorney. The attorney was a great worshipper of the jolly god ; but the fiery port defied even him. The doctor, on the contrary, was a man more in search of objects which he could turn into ridicule ; and his sharp eyes were ever on the alert for some fun. Opposite to them sat a coarse-looking man, of about forty, with a girl evidently on good terms with herself, and most solicitous to attract attention. She was not long before she attracted the doctor ; and, by way of beginning an acquaintance, the doctor jammed his hat on his head and screwed up his countenance to the exact resemblance of the man opposite her. So well was this done, that the waiter asked him if he would take his dinner where he was, or with the lady opposite.

This invitation alarmed the right gentleman,

who called out, "What the devil do you mean by that?" The frightened waiter turned short round and found the right man in the right box; and when he changed his position in order to ascertain the likeness, the doctor had taken off his hat, and made himself up into a most sentimental-looking gentleman, anxious for a glass of water and a tooth-pick. This had not escaped the eyes of the lady, who, being on the look-out for admirers, had been rather struck with the doctor's versatility of talent.

Whilst the doctor and his friend joked over the hot port, the elderly-looking, rough man was talking loud of former days—of battles by flood and field, and of his acquaintance with every governor of every island in the West Indies. He at last got to Martinique. And he was beginning a description of the capture of that island with "You must know—"

"I should think I must, Mr. Watson, or I must be a much more stupid person than I am inclined to believe myself. All the time you were making love to me, you told me of this extraordinary swim with the sword in your mouth—the observations of Sir John Jervis—your promotion—and Heaven only knows what besides! And now you tell me 'you must know.'—Ever since our marriage, which is now one whole week, I do not think you have ever

once thought of my appearance, but talked incessantly about your own affairs. You would have done capitally to have amused Rosa Talbot, or Susan Monckton !”

The doctor started at hearing the name of the very person of whom they were in pursuit. And as he was a man who turned every opportunity to his own advantage, fearless of offending, since that was never his intention, and willing to please, that being his peculiar talent, he entered into conversation with the captor of Martinique, and soon led him into an animated description of that battle ; whilst Mrs. Watson indulged in yawns, which opened her mouth sufficiently wide to rival that of an alligator catching flies.

“ A sailor, by Jove !” said the doctor ; “ *this is* fortunate. I love your profession, sir—I honour the wooden walls of old England ; and, although a German by birth, a man who can do credit to those who protect their country, and maintain the honour of its flag. I presume you are an admiral !”

The lady was instantly in love with the doctor to take her husband for an admiral. She never admired him so much before !

There is no man who, having been taken for a superior officer, likes to dwindle down to the painful reality of inferiority. The mistake convinces

him that in justice he ought to have held the higher rank ; and he only lets himself down a peg, in the hopes that the next step will be ceded to him without any interrogation. Watson answered with a peculiar smile,—“ Not *quite* an admiral yet ! although one day I might get the bunting at the mast-head ! ” Meaning that he might yet be an admiral.

“ And do you know Miss Monckton, madam ? ” said the solicitor, joining in. “ I remember a girl of that name who, when young, promised to be a great beauty. She was the daughter of a clergyman of St. Giles’s.”

“ She’s the same,” answered Mrs. Watson, with a very independent toss of the head, such as a horse often gives when he is incumbered with the funeral feathers ; “ and whatever she might have promised, she took care never to perform : a plainer girl can hardly be found in Devonshire. And as for her being a parson’s daughter, the more shame for her, as *I* know—”

“ Whew ! ” whistled the doctor ; “ what’s in the wind now ? ”

“ Nothing,” said Watson, “ but what is common enough in life—a little revenge from an insulted female.”

“ A *what*, Mr. Watson !—a female ! What’s that, I should like to know ? ”

"Why a woman, to be sure!"

"A woman? Why, that's worse! Oh, you barbarian!—you pitch-and-tar sailor!—you uncouth, unlicked cub!"

"Avast heaving, Mrs. Watson! I made you a lady when you were only a lady's maid."

"Oh, the barbarous ruffian!"

"And mark my words, I'll teach you better manners than you were ever taught before. So if ever you get your kitchen lingo adrift again, I'll give you such a precious starting, that you'll carry the quarter-deck dictionary in your head ever afterwards. Mind that, my lady! and don't think you can command a man who, at the taking of Martinique, under the very eye of the great Admiral Sir John Jervis, now Earl St. Vincent, &c. &c.—"

"A great victory, sir," said the attorney, "which you have had the kindness to relate to us."

"I'll gain a greater, sir!" said Watson, who was now getting half-seas-over. "Any man may swim to a battery and take it; but shew me the man who can quiet a woman's tongue—a *female's* lip!"

Mrs. Watson looked unutterable disdain; but she did not dare say a word. Watson was the captain of his own ship, that was evident. And however lazy he might have been with his brig, he had practised some excellent discipline since

his marriage, and had every prospect for the future, if not of a happy, at least, of a quiet life. "Come, toddle away to bed with you; don't you see I've stuck the fork in the table?"—(This was formerly a signal for all youngsters to go to bed.)—"Come, be off! When you were a lady's maid, you were obliged to sit up for your mistress; but you won't comb my hair, be assured, although I'll curl your's—brush!"

Mrs. Watson, with apparent meekness in her countenance, but a devil in her eye, got up directly. She gave the doctor a very intelligible look, and retired.

Watson soon got uproarious; the quiet solicitor retired when he volunteered some cockpit songs; and the doctor kindly assisted him to bed.

In the night there was a great disturbance in the inn; the chambermaid was drowsy enough to set fire to some curtains. The alarm brought numbers to the assistance of the master of the house. And the waiter distinctly told the innkeeper that he was under the greatest obligation to Mr. Watson; for he saw him come out of his room, and no one could mistake his face; that he was the most active in extinguishing the flames, although so lightly dressed as to incur the greatest danger. And that it was owing to him the fire did so little damage.

“I can’t exactly understand this,” said the landlord ; “willing enough as I am to thank every gentleman for his assistance. But Mr. Watson, as you call him, went to bed drunk, and he is now asleep in the other gentleman’s room. And how a man can get drunk one moment, and get sober the next, and then drunk again, without any assistance, I don’t know.”

“That’s the gentleman, I’ll swear!” said the waiter, “who came out of the lady’s room, although he appeared quite sober then ; for there’s no one else in the house like him. And this,” said the waiter, pointing to the doctor, “is the only person who was not present.”

“I do sleep so very soundly,” said the doctor. “The trumpeter of a regiment slept next room to me when I was a young man, and, although he practised all night, he never used to awake me.”

Many people doubt circumstantial evidence, but believe everything which a man swears to positively. There are some cases in which by accident a man may be mistaken.

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH TWO PEOPLE GAIN A POINT, AND A WISE MAN
RAILS AGAINST SOLITUDE.

It was early the next morning, and before Mr. Watson had recovered his senses, that the doctor, the attorney, and the now quieted horse, were jolting along on their journey. Mrs. Watson was all smiles and kindness. She had quite forgotten the last night's words and deeds, and was all meekness and affection. Watson swore he never would get drunk again, and excused himself for his last night's language in a declaration that he was so excited by the relation of the Martinique victory, and so pleased with the doctor's company, that he had forgotten the naval discipline, and been drunk at quarters.

“They are gone, I believe,” said the modest Mrs. Watson. “They are going the same road as we are, and sleep at Exeter to-night. I hope we shall be able to get as far, for there is nothing that keeps up a person’s respectability so much as good company ; and he is one of the first London physicians, going down to see a sick patient.”

“He takes his time about it, then,” said Watson ; “he never should attend on me. But how came you to know who they are, and where they are going ?”

“Why, because they said so before you went to bed ; and you ought to remember that, for it was just before you sent for the bowl of punch.”

“I must have been considerably in the wind last night, for how I came to be so active about this fire, and made afterwards a wrong board into another man’s bed-room, I don’t know ; but I’m quite certain of one thing, I don’t recollect anything about it. Come, let us pipe to breakfast, and we’ll get under weigh afterwards.”

Mrs. Watson had a most particular wish to be revenged upon Miss Susan, as to her she attributed the loss of her place ; but to her likewise she might have attributed her marriage with so distinguished a naval officer.

“If,” she thought to herself, “there is only a county ball, I will stand one above her in spite of

her ; and if that will not break her heart, I know nothing of our sex. Oh, the delight of shewing her my superiority, of dancing next to her, and of having the *right* to be above her ! Talk of the pleasure of virtue, indeed ! Give me the keen delight of revenge ! And as for that poor, sick, miserable, consumptive Miss Talbot, she can never see me in my proper place, for she must have been dead this four years."

Mr. Watson had made a precious selection of a wife ; but marriage is, we are told, a lottery. Some young ladies call it destiny—fate—and everything else but the proper name. He believed his Betsy Weller a hard-working, industrious, clever, honest, virtuous woman. Who does not fancy the woman of his heart a phœnix before he marries ? And how slowly are those bright illusions stripped off ! But although only married a week, Watson was sufficiently clever to see that supremacy was the first object, even in a lady's maid ;—that from the instant he married he had to struggle for his lawful right. The struggle was very short. He cut the cat's head off the first evening, as the Persian story relates the manner of obtaining sovereignty ; and in so doing, and establishing his right, he made his wife his bitterest enemy. She for ever railed at him, indirectly ; talked of his age, the disparity of years ; wondered what a young woman could do

with an old man; and had as many quotations about the different stages of life as a play actor: and when she gave him the benefit of her reading, he found it a hundred-fold easier to command a brig with sixty men, and keep all in good order and discipline, than one woman. But he conquered her.

The doctor was knowing enough to go to another hotel than that he had named to Mrs. Watson. He was very apprehensive of another fire in the house, so that at Exeter neither parties met. Watson intended to take a respectable cottage at Stonehouse, there to live luxuriantly upon ninety pounds a year, in the vicinity of a dock-yard and, within hail of a ship; and pushed on to gain what he believed the summit of human happiness. He looked forward to many a night's joviality with old shipmates. His world was on the waters. All of his youth's best recollections was associated with scenes afloat, the actors in which now commanded ships, or, like himself, had sunk into oblivion at Plymouth Dock. With those companions he could tell his anecdotes of West India gratifications, and there he could lie down and die contentedly. His wife had no objection to this plan. She wished to remove from all who had ever known her, and to start as a lady by birth, education, and manners. Watson followed up his plan; took a cottage at

Stonehouse, in which we leave him for the present, he having quite enough on his hands to tame his shrew, and conquer his own bad propensity to drink.

Mrs. Talbot gave her unexpected visitors a warm welcome; and great was the doctor's surprise and gratification to find in Tom Bowling, now a captain in the navy, the same urchin who defied his authority, broke from his schoolmaster, and who had fought his way to his rank. Nor was he less gratified to find poor Susan, the forlorn girl who had struggled against poverty and the world's relentless persecutions, the wife of so estimable a character. Thus, so far, their cruize had prospered.

The doctor, who assumed the right of an old friend, told Susan the object of their visit. "You are found," he said, "and he is found: there can be no doubt but that he is one and the same person with the dog-stealer's son. But we are now in search of his father."

"His father," replied Susan, "you know, is long since dead."

"If I thought so," observed the doctor, dryly, "I would have searched the tomb-stones, and not the records of such living beauties as yourself. Bowling, as you call him, is no more the son of that Hanson than I am. He was stolen from a house by the dog-stealer, and we have every reason to

believe that he is the son of one Mr. Harrison, who lives near this village."

"I have never heard of the name, but if he is here under that or any other, our good-natured rector will soon find him out; but, oh, doctor! what pleasure has your visit not caused me. Captain Bowling has ever told me that he felt confident, from words which fell from this dog-stealer's wife, that he was not their son. It was the only thing in existence to which he could not reconcile himself; and although he spoke kindly even of them, he ever felt he was born above them. This pleasure, then, I shall be the first to communicate. I, his wife,—one that from the earliest infancy he has loved,—I thank God have now the means of giving him the brightest intelligence he ever received. The rector dines here to-day; he is—for there is no secret which time will not divulge, even if a woman's lips are by a miracle sealed—engaged to be married to Mrs. Talbot. Tell him plainly the object of your visit, and I have mistaken that good man if he would not delay even his own marriage to do the Samaritan act of restoring a lost son to his parents. But, doctor, remember that I am particularly concerned in this discovery: it will give to me a new father and a new mother, and my heart swells with impatience to form again those ties and affections which have once snapped so rudely, so suddenly.

You can have horses, carriages, and servants. Here all is at your service; and I know I only deprive Mrs. Talbot of a pleasure in being the first to make the offer of them."

"Does every one who lives in the country become thus hospitable — thus eager to do good acts?"

"Virtue and honesty, doctor," said Susan, with a smile, "live where nature is brightest and fairest; and where civilization is not, hospitality is the greatest. Call us what you like,—country clowns, clods, bumpkins, or louts,—but you cannot call us unmindful of the first act which even Mahomet imposed on his followers."

"Well *said*, my little Turk," remarked the rector, as he came in, the very features of his face appearing to have been chiselled by the hand of benevolence and good humour. He was made acquainted with the doctor and his object; and as the reverend gentleman, in the intensity of his attention, assumed an expression of countenance of mingled wonder, pleasure, and gravity, the mimic could not resist his peculiar fancy, and twisted his face into so complete a resemblance, that Susan burst out into a fit of laughter.

"Well, you whimsical creature," said the rector, "what do you see so very ridiculous in either of us that you must laugh?"

“It was merely a droll remembrance connected with former times which flashed across me,” she replied; then turning to the mimic, added, “ah, doctor, you are just as bad now as you were twenty years ago.”

“I’m so pleased with the face,” said the doctor, “that I think I shall wear it instead of my own;” and he whispered in her ear, “I want a wife!—what would the widow think?”

“I flatter myself,” said the rector, “I can read countenances as well as any man, and from your eagerness, sir, to undertake this difficult task of discovering the family, your features declare you the honest-hearted, good-tempered man I know I shall find you; but, to tell you the truth, I think your face is very much altered since I came in.”

“I hope you don’t take me for a double-faced man at any rate; my pretty advocate here will give me a better character than that.”

“Indeed I will not,” said Susan, laughing; “for Heaven’s sake get your own face back. Mrs. Talbot will take you to be either the rector or his twin-brother. I never saw anything half so ridiculous in my life.”

“I must go,” said the worthy divine, “and get some information about these Harrisons. Good morning, sir; we meet at dinner. But I cannot help asking my little friend, Susan, if”—said the

recto, hesitating—"if I have not the honour to resemble you somewhat in the face?"

"No, no," said Susan, "*he* resembles *you*—that's all the difference."

Johnson says that unexpected visitors in the country are like provisions thrown into a half-starved garrison. This importation of London men was likely to keep the old house in merriment for some time. The doctor was so pleased at finding his former friend's daughter respectable in life, happy, and handsome, that he was in excellent spirits, and amused himself in deceiving Susan, who gave him sixpence, believing him to be an old gentleman in distress, and the next minute desired the servant to see who that young man was who was walking across the lawn.

Whilst thus one branch of the household were amused, the sober-minded solicitor was gaining the confidence of Mrs. Talbot. He also related the object of their trip, and soon enlisted Mrs. Talbot warmly in the cause. She felt for Susan; and no mother ever embraced a daughter more tenderly than she did the companion of her deceased daughter when she ascertained that her husband's birth was respectable, and that all the clouds of his youth were likely to clear away, and shew a bright horizon. The attorney was eager to finish his work, and to return to the smoke of

the metropolis, for his life was made pleasant from constant employment and constant novelty, and it was in London only that he had the excitement he desired; but eager as he was he could not convert the doctor to his wishes. The latter was a man who enjoyed pleasure, and who made his profession a recreation. He had amassed a considerable fortune, partly by lucky windfalls, partly by prudence, but mostly by exertion. Now he no longer toiled like a galley-slave. He was withdrawing by degrees from practice; and having taken a fancy to Mrs. Talbot's house, was not in a hurry to leave it, excepting as far as the search after Harrison was concerned.

About five miles from Mrs. Talbot's there was a lone, sequestered spot, which stood about a mile from the high-road, and on this spot stood a neat cottage; but so little was it known, that even the rector had never heard of it until he set his myrmidons to work to ferret out the parents of Bowling. His clerk, however, found out that persons of the name of Harrison lived there, that they had so completely retired from the world, that none ever saw them but at about eight in the morning and at sunset. They had but one servant; and although the butcher and the baker went regularly three times a-week, they never had seen the faces of their customers. The servant

paid them as they brought their goods, and the door was shut without any further notice on either side.

It appeared that for a month every year they regularly left the cottage. None saw them go; none saw them return. The cessation and recurrence of orders to the baker and butcher alone gave intimation of their flight or return. In the front of this cottage was a little garden remarkable for its neatness and order. Few knew how much of these qualities it owed to the master's eye and hand.

When the rector heard of the residence of these people, he immediately ordered his black cob to be saddled; and the stout, sturdy little animal seemed, although getting old, to carry his master with the firmness of step which has made the words familiar—"It feels strong under me."

"I have," (thought the rector, as he rode along,) "a pleasant and a difficult task to perform; but my profession, thank God, supplies me with an introduction. The rector leaves his card where it would be presumptuous in another so to do. The rector's duty is to know all his parishioners; for if of his faith, or of another, the hand of charity should be open to all, and the deserving and industrious cherished and supported. It is the rector's duty to know the character of every man."

These arguments cheered up the good soul as he trotted along the narrow lanes, and he was kept in constant employment clearing his eyes and his ears of the flies, gnats, and other insinuating devils who live to annoy men of bright eyes wherever they go. At last he got to the cottage, and pulled up his gallant steed to survey the premises. A good general always surveys the field carefully before coming to action.

The cottage was evidently possessed by those who had money at command, for it was a picture of neatness. The woodbines wound carelessly about the trellis work, which shut out the only opening to the road, and the whole place seemed covered with roses, which, at that season, were in full blossom. It looked the most delightful retreat from a world of care and woe that could be met with; but the rector was not a man partial to such retreats.

“ Oh, solitude, where are thy charms ! ” said he, as he looked at the scene before him. “ What hands are to pluck these flowers ? or are they to bud, blossom, and fade, scarcely regarded ? To what use is this beautiful view if only melancholy eyes gaze upon it, and it has not power to cheer them ? How sweetly would the voice of the young girl sound through those shrubberies, where now all is silent but the chirrup of the bird. I would

rather hear the cracked voice of a London crier, than catch no sound but the echo of my footfall, and live in one eternal silence as in a tomb. What is it after all, if a man leads the life of seclusion, but a handsome grave? It is in society that men live, and breathe, and have their being; and sorrow only grows more intense the more it is nurtured in seclusion. I'll use the privilege of my calling—a clergyman cannot offend when his purpose is charity."

He alighted from his cob, and passing the bridle round a small post, which seemed uselessly placed to keep the gate open, he approached the entrance, which was almost entirely concealed by the roses. There was a bell, which, when pulled, seemed to ring louder than that of a cathedral; the air within had not been disturbed by noise, and the sound was consequently the louder. For some time the summons remained unheeded, until at last a door was heard to shut, and a footstep approached.

The door was locked; and, when opened, an elderly woman appeared. She seemed astonished at the sight of a human creature, and gazed with surprise at the gentleman before her.

"My good woman," began the clergyman, (and he was irresistible, for his voice was as sweet as his features were benevolent,) "I must herald my visit by informing you that I am the rector of the

parish; and I own I am not a little to blame in having allowed such a time to pass before I paid my respects to the owner of this beautiful cottage."

"My master and mistress, sir," said the old maid, "never receive any visits, especially at this season of the year, and more especially in this week."

"May I ask why this season, which is the most delightful of all,—when God shines brightest in his works,—when all nature is alive in beauty, and age itself looks fairer from the charms around her,—is chosen for seclusion?"

"It is connected with a sorrowful event, which my master has never forgotten. I should offend him if I were to admit you."

"Take this card, and tell him that his days of grief are over, that the storm of affliction will subside, and a clearer and brighter day beam upon him; tell him I, the rector of the parish, desire an interview, and that my holy calling is the guarantee of his security."

"They are at prayers, sir."

"And who so proper to direct their prayers as their spiritual pastor? Go!"

CHAPTER VIII.

IN WHICH IT IS SHEWN THAT SORROW MAY LINGER OUT THE
NIGHT, BUT JOY COMETH IN THE MORNING.

“ I AM honoured by the attention which has led to this visit,” said Mr. Harrison, as the rector entered the room ; “ but I had hoped that the few days I have yet to live might not have been disturbed by any.” Then, pointing to an elderly female in the room, he added, “ That is my wife, sir.”

The divine was a man of the world, and knew well that if he plumped out his story at once, those so buried in grief would either go mad from excess of joy, or, totally discrediting the truth, would obstinately shut their senses against conviction.

He chose, therefore, to pursue their path for the present, watching for the first turning to direct them to better prospects.

“I should not, sir, have ventured to disturb your solitude had not my duty rendered it imperative. It was but yesterday I learnt your abode, and I hasten to pay that visit of respect which my inclination, as well as my duty, prompts.”

Mr. Harrison bowed a sort of civil acknowledgment of the compliment, but he was evidently ill at ease; and in spite of the rector’s countenance, which never had failed him, he began to think that he must come to the point. He, however, tried again.

“It is some years, Mr. Harrison, since you came here, I believe?”

“Too many, sir; too many! ‘Death shuns the wretch who fain the blow would meet.’ I linger on with now my only consolations, my wife and my Bible, waiting for the day which seems never to approach.”

“It is a great blessing to be so prepared for so awful an event, but our lives were given us for something better than to be darkened by the constant presence of death.”

“All is taken from me—all—all! Years have passed—twenty-two years next Friday—since I was left a childless man; and though time, with many, heals the wounds of the afflicted, in this

instance time but makes the affliction sharper, since the prop is destroyed which would have supported my age. Look there, sir! There is my wife, who ever since the sad event has scarcely raised her eyes. She knows you are present, but she is ignorant of our discourse."

"And yet, sir, there is always hope. The veriest wretch who wends his way to the gallows has hope until the bolt is removed. Nay, not far from here I performed the marriage ceremony for a young lady who was dying of consumption, and who was so buoyed up by hope that she never credited even the physician or myself. If your child died, then it became your duty to reconcile yourself to the will of Him above; if otherwise, he yet may live, and yet be restored to you."

Harrison fixed his eyes upon the rector. A flash of imagination had brightened his features; but it quietly relaxed into the same sorrowful countenance, and the head, merely by its motion, seemed to say, "No, no."

"Pardon me, Mr. Harrison, for thus intruding on your sorrows, but I have known many receive great relief from the repetition of their misfortunes. Sometimes a flood of tears relieves the oppression of the heart; and as the cloud thus pours out its waters of sorrow, the bright sun of hope gives a gleam of future happiness. I have already, from

your mouth, learnt the cause of your grief; give that grief vent, and let me share in it by hearing it." The rector had taken Mr. Harrison's hand, and the kindness of his manner had completely charmed him.

"I will tell you, sir," he replied, though with some difficulty, "that you are the only one to whom I have ever unburthened my mind." Harrison then related the story much as Mrs. Marsh had related it to the attorney; for both had got it from the same source, and both were evidently deceived. "Now, sir, listen and see how a brother's love may be repaid by ingratitude. I am the son, and the next heir to a property of great extent. Nay, sir, there is that worldly bauble, a title, for which men often in this world pawn their eternal happiness—for the gratification of being called a lord. Poor, ignorant fools! How I pity them! Is a lord encased in other flesh than ourselves? And what I feel now as a commoner, shall I not feel as a peer? Does the title exempt us from the common lot of human nature? Can a title cure the sharp pangs of disease? Can it lighten the oppression of the heart? Can it make a man stronger to resist evil, or firmer to do good? Can it surmount the witherings of age, or hold up a shield against the dart of death? My brother was discontented at my marriage. He tried to thwart me in my incli-

nations when I first learnt to love. He is a soldier, a man of ambition ; one who looks with unbounded satisfaction on a star, and sees not in that order the sacrifice of human life which has obtained it. The proud man is made prouder from a ribbon ! And what is it for ? How is it earned ? The man who wears it directed others, who well executed his orders ; and when he dies, the baubles are placed upon his coffin, and the spectators say, ‘ *There was a great man !*’ My brother was under many obligations to me, and I cherished him as became my duty ; but when my first child, and he a *boy*, was born, an estrangement took place, which arose, as he says, from a mere difference of opinion. He withdrew himself from my house, and used the very horse—for it was coal black, as dark as the deed he did—that I had given him. At that time, as I told you, my house was by the road side ; the servant had seen the horse and the rider a thousand times ; and she will swear it was he who stole my child, and waved his handkerchief as if in defiance. Am I wrong in shutting myself from an ungrateful world which I despise, when even my own brother’s hand is raised against me—when he is the robber of my house to serve his own ambition ?”

“ If even all this were true, which it is not, you still are wrong. Of course you have endeavoured to find this child ?”

“Money has been lavished ; cities, towns, counties, settlements abroad, the colonies, have been ransacked, but he has never been heard of. One word to you is sufficient : my brother is married, and in his family the title and estate descend.

“Has your brother denied this charge?”

“At first, with all the warmth of honour, he repudiated the charge with scorn ; he then has tried to lull me by affection ; he pretends to have joined in the search ; but he never has denied that on that morning, at that hour, he rode by the house, and waved his handkerchief to one he believed to be my wife.”

“And supposing now, Mr. Harrison, that you were to find that you had been mistaken in the child-stealer ; that your boy still lives ; that conviction, clear as that sun which shines above us, should point out the youth ; what reparation could you make to this brother whom you have stigmatized—nay, cursed, discountenanced, disowned, and dishonoured?”

“I should pray to God to grant me one sight of this boy, and then crush me with his thunders.”

“Rather pray that your brother’s good feeling might volunteer forgiveness, and with outstretched arms run to clasp you to his bosom, to share in your happiness, to lead you back to society, to bless you whilst living, and mourn for you when dead.

You spoke of him as ambitious, and despised the rewards which his sovereign has given for his services. Read the account in this paper, which I have in my pocket, of a brilliant service performed at sea."

"I have done with this world, sir, and I read but that book."

"You will read that book with double zest when you have read this, and I take my leave of you. Oblige me. It is perhaps a curious request from a clergyman; but it comes from one who will cheer the lone pilgrim, and shew him that he has yet in store the two greatest blessings in existence—forgiveness for sins, and the end of the long night of darkness."

Harrison took the paper. At first he seemed to skim it carelessly, but as he went on he became more interested; and when he came to the capture of the frigate, he said, "I could live in the world to feel half the joy the father of that man must feel, as he reads this glowing account of his son's valour and prudence from the pen of another."

"Then return to the world; open these doors; leave this seclusion; rejoice loudly; and be grateful to Heaven! Your brother is restored to you, freed from all suspicion; your son lives in the person of the individual of whom you have been reading!" Harrison clasped his hands together, and

muttering, "My God! my God!" fell senseless at the feet of the rector. Nor was that excellent man unmoved by the scene: he sank into his chair, and, covering his face in his hands, burst into a flood of tears. The wife, startled at her husband's fall, seemed to have imagined some injury had been inflicted upon him; and she seized the rector by the collar, and held him firmly in her grasp. She more resembled the maniac than the woman; and being deaf, could not understand the rector, whose anxiety to make her a participator in the news brought in the old maid. If anything could have changed the rector's burst of grief to one of laughter, it would have been the absurd position in which he found himself placed; for the maid, as maids always think it requisite to do, on her appearance, made more noise than half a score of dogs baying the moon.

Harrison soon recovered; and as the returning life brought with it a return of memory, he seized the rector's hand and said, "It was this good purpose brought you here?"

"I never consent to be the harbinger of sorrow," said the clergyman, smiling. "I had a good work to perform, and I have done it to my own satisfaction."

When Harrison, by signs and bawling, made his wife understand the purport of the late

discourse, she waved her hand to and fro, as much as to say, "Impossible!" and gave the rector to understand that she was as sceptical as St. Peter of old, and that without she saw the marks upon his shoulders, and felt with her own hands the mole she well remembered, she never would believe in an event to which all miracles were insignificant; and that she required proofs stronger than assertions, for her brother-in-law, she was certain, never would take a child away to rear it up as a barrier against his heart's fondest wishes.

The rector left the task of communicating how the clear evidence was brought about to the husband, and he was soon satisfied that the groves and the shrubberies must have occasionally louder notes reverberating through them than any produced by the whistle of the blackbird; for if the lady was deaf she was by no means dumb, and, being hard of hearing herself, imagined the whole world suffered under the same painful affliction, and her sharp notes penetrated the brain.

"But I have another piece of news for you before I depart. You lost only one child; you will find two."

Mr. Harrison had long given up everything like a joke, and was very dull of comprehension; but the rector, as he saw smiling faces now around him, mentioned Bowling's marriage, the loveliness of

Susan, her long-tried constancy, her affection, and spoke of her in such raptures that a husband accustomed to be absent might well be jealous in overhearing. "Now I must return," he added; "I have to make her glad by giving an account of you."

"Return you will not, I assure you, until you have done me one kinder office. Teach me, sir, to offer up a prayer, in all the sincerity of my heart, which shall convey to Him my fervent gratitude; and in that thanksgiving pour fourth an earnest desire that I may be so strengthened in love to the great Giver of this unexpected blessing, that in my love for my restored son I may not forget Him who has thus sheltered him from the storms of life, and conducted him to his long-expectant father."

Never did the rector perform the grateful task with half the eloquence with which he seemed suddenly inspired. Well did he teach, if Harrison required instruction, how a true and grateful heart should offer up its thanksgivings. He did not follow the usual repetition of prayers, which from long custom are repeated without effort, and in which, whilst the tongue mumbles, the heart is absent; but he spoke as if the lost child was restored to *him*, and breathed an atmosphere of devotion around him which all seemed anxious to inhale.

How different this scene, in the solitude of a chamber, to the public exhibition in a church,

where men of seventy repeat the fifth, and ladies of ninety most piously supplicate that they may not break the seventh, commandment ! In the absolution, also, the lips of nine out of ten may be seen murmuring what the priest alone should utter ; and the whole service, from its constant repetition, becomes a matter of memory rather than prayer. And while the eyes are roaming about in all directions, some dwelling on a face, and some on a ribbon, the words are uttered with the accustomed volubility ; the usual uprisings and genuflexions are performed ; and the congregation walk out with richly-dressed servants carrying their useless prayer-books : the whole world acknowledging, with unaffected simplicity, the devotion and propriety of their neighbour.

Harrison had not entered a church for twenty-two years ; and yet not a day had passed that three times at least he had not offered up his prayers for assistance and support.

“ I would ask you to stay and dine with us,” said Harrison, “ but that this cottage has been a stranger to the stranger—here the sound of revelry, the shout of happiness, has never penetrated. I built it myself as my church, and nothing has ever profaned the temple. A brighter day, perhaps merely the bright spark before the light of life is extinguished, seems about to shine

upon me ; but I will never leave this cottage, or ever forget the hand which has upheld me through the severity of my trial."

"I dare say," said the clergyman, after he had mentioned the impossibility of his remaining—for we are bound in truth to say that the rector enjoyed, in proper moderation, the pleasures of the table—"that my horse is nearly as tired of waiting for me, as my friends are at Mrs. Talbot's. I believe I have little more to relate than that with which I have made you acquainted. Your son is at present at Gibraltar; your daughter-in-law about five miles distant from you. The cloud which hung over his birth has now cleared away; and when you hear of your son's honourable conduct through life, and see how steadily he has pursued the right path—praised by Nelson, and rewarded by Collingwood and St. Vincent—you will not look with an unfavourable eye upon your daughter, when I inform you that she first instructed him—first taught him to read and to write—and on her knees heard him repeat his first prayer. It is due to her that she should be known to you; and she has, I dare say, long before this, despatched her letter, announcing the discovery we have made. The German doctor and the solicitor are ready with their proofs to convince you he is your son—as they are satisfied from their search that you

are the father. I am, however, in duty bound to tell you, that the man who stole him from you left him all the money he possessed, and likewise left the clue by which this has been unravelled."

"Money!" said Harrison; "my son will never want that. I had an affluent fortune years and years ago;—here I have not spent one-fifth of my income; and from another source the supplies must be handsome. Good-bye, sir! you will return to your friends with a light heart and cheerful countenance, feeling that in this day's visit you have cheered the heart of the aged, strengthened the infirm, and conducted two people from the abyss of sorrow to the very pinnacle of happiness!"

The wife, who was not at all convinced that the report was true, was not the less grateful to the rector, whose eyes became rather dim as the old people again and again pressed his hand, and as even the servant bowed her head and prayed God's blessing on him.

The cob had certainly manifested great impatience; he had established a regular rut by pawing the ground; and had cribbed the post so earnestly, that it gave the upright an appearance of utility in defending the gate from clumsy coachmen. It was six o'clock; the dinner-bell must have rung at Mrs. Talbot's; the rector had five miles to make good, and then to apologize for

his dress ; but the cob was as eager as his master. And Harrison heard the quick trot of that sturdy animal as it retired from his cottage, and left him once more in the solitude he had coveted.

But the cottage that evening changed its appearance ; there was an air of brightness about it it had never known since its existence. Harrison seemed to grow young ; the wife was seen actually in the lane ; and the barrier which shut them from the world was evidently broken down.

The rector was hailed with real joy on his arrival. His countenance was sufficient to convince the party of his success ; and the only envy expressed was that others had been denied the pleasure of conveying happiness to the Harrisons. Susan laughed, and cried, and cared not, in the exhilaration of the moment, for any uneasiness she might have given either Mrs. Talbot or her husband, had he been near, as she threw her arms round the rector's neck and kissed him.

"Rather pleasant payment that !" said the doctor. "I say, Mr. Lawyer, if our fees were paid in such sweet coin, we should not wish to decline our professional attendance !"

"And as we are parties concerned in this transaction, and evidently active agents for both parties, I consider the payment made to the rector as a promissory note ; the same amount of which is due

to both of us." And as the gallant attorney muttered these words, the dinner was announced ; and he offered himself to conduct Susan.

"That's what you call a note of hand I suppose, Mr. Lawyer," continued the doctor, "payable at sight ; but I give you warning that if I don't participate in the profits, I shall inform Captain Bowling that you have exacted payment from a '*femme couverte*,' and subjected yourself to an action, which is not so pleasant sometimes, especially with the navy."

CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH THERE IS SOME ACCOUNT OF "NIGHTS AT SEA."

IF the French account had been credited in England, Sir James Saumarez's gallant action at Algeziras would have been believed a perfect defeat. It certainly was no victory to England : and as one ship was left behind, the French had the best claim to the laurel. Still the attack was spirited ; and the scant winds may be accused of having contributed more to the defence of the French squadron, than any resistance made by them. Bowling and the fighting doctor were very crest-fallen at the result of their day's action. And when the shattered state of the Cæsar and Pompie

were remarked, it appeared a certainty that the French rear-admiral would be able to make good his retreat to Cadiz, if his ships were not so injured by being run aground as to render it imperative on him to burn them rather than they should remain to be burnt by the English.

The French rear-admiral despatched an express overland to Cadiz, to claim the assistance of Admirals Massaredo and Dumanoir. On the 9th, five Spanish sail-of-the-line and three frigates put to sea from Cadiz, under the command of Don Juan de Moreno, and proceeded to Algeziras to give convoy to the French squadron. But this time had not been lost by the English. Their ships, all but the *Pompie*, were got ready for another brush; and as the two squadrons united, and stood towards Cabrita Point, Captain Bowling had the satisfaction of seeing the order for weighing and preparing for action flying at the Cæsar's mast-heads.

The gallant action which followed, and which immortalized the names of Saumarez and Keats, gave Bowling an insight into a general engagement—an advantage to the young officer inconceivable; for acting in concert, like fiddling in concert, must be much practised before the performers arrive at any perfection. Single actions were as plentiful as rain in April; not a day came

without some account arriving of successes gained. And the navy of Great Britain, at that time, stood singularly pre-eminent above all other navies of the world. The battles of St. Vincent, of the Nile, and of Copenhagen, had given us the supremacy ; and we had officers afloat who well knew how to maintain it. He must indeed have been a strangely unfortunate man who passed through his time in that service, and was never in action ; it must have been an *inaction* quite incredible.

“ I think, sir,” said the doctor one evening, when the captain and his friend were playing chess in the after-cabin, as the Thames was bobbing about off Cadiz, watching the combined fleet in that port, “ that every man in his lifetime does a vast number of useless things.”

“ I should think so, doctor,” said Bowling ; “ but what particular useless thing do you think I have done lately ? ”

“ Why, sir, I think, for instance, a captain to marry in war time, when he is spliced one day and the splice drawn the next, is a very useless ceremony. To pay for what he never enjoys ; to have all the cares of matrimony and all its privations, without any of its pleasures, is certainly a very useless work, and, to my mind, highly unsatisfactory.”

“And yet, doctor, I would not for all the world be disunited.”

“Ay, sir, all married men,” said the doctor, “say the same. They are in the trap, and spread out the bait to catch the others. I am all for liberty, either in matters of religion, state, or the common circumstances of life; and as for marriage, I hold it in perfect abhorrence in a sailor,—it’s a capital resource for a lawyer or a parson, but it was never intended for soldiers or sailors. It’s like water, foolishly used by some people as a beverage, whereas it was only meant by nature to wash or shave with. It may be applied medicinally to be sure, but then in very small quantities, and considerably altered in appearance and taste.”

“I am afraid, doctor, you are no advocate for a black list and six-water grog?”

“There again you see, sir, how you bear out my argument; if water were a blessing you would not give it as a punishment. For my part, I think the greatest punishment which can be inflicted upon the human race is marriage.”

“Very comfortable reflection for me, doctor,” said Bowling; “in the mean time your king’s in check.”

“If we look back on the history of the world,” said the doctor, “and we all talk of the wisdom of

our ancestors, we shall find those jolly old gentlemen had no idea of being yoked together like two bullocks in a plough. They had just as many as they could pay for, and they were not prosecuted for bigamy."

"I fancy," said Bowling, "I have just as many as I can pay for."

"Ay, sir, as Selden says, they are expensive playthings; those who have wives must pay for their trinkets, as those who have monkeys must pay for the glasses they break. I count, sir, that I am now your 'better.' I can go where I will without trouble. I am always at single anchor, ready to avail myself of any chance. You cannot unmoor without difficulty; nor can you move without a barge load of birds, bandboxes, maids' trunks, carpet-bags, sweetmeats and sandwiches—that's check-mate, sir."

"Why, doctor, you talked me out of it!"

"There again you see, sir, the sad effects of marriage—the subject closely concerned you; and in listening to that, you became inattentive to this. If I was first lord of the Admiralty, no married man should ever have a ship. They are always thinking of home—of their expenses—of their fifteen children: they are crippled in their resources; and in many cases are not so desperately brave as before their marriage."

“I must confess, doctor, that all my thoughts are at home. Every day now seems an age, which I linger through to get nearer to Susan ; and I could willingly resign the service to live with her in the seclusion of the country.”

“And very tired you would soon get of that. Which is the worst, to live in the country, or to be a horse in a mill, is difficult to decide ; both go through the same monotonous round—they never extend either their intellectual or ambulatory circle. They both lazily loll through their work, and hail darkness with delight as they escape from their toil to get quietly to bed. It is a life of existence too dependent to be pleasant—too lonesome to be coveted. A midshipman’s birth is preferable to a cottage in seclusion ; and an active life, with even poverty for a shipmate, is more to my fancy than the sad, sullen, somebreness of what is styled rural retirement.”

“Place your men, doctor ; I shall never be dull in the country, for I am sure of you as a visitor.”

“Then pray, sir, cut down all your trees, and keep your ropes for swings out of sight—I should hang myself in a week !”

“Leave that for Ketch after you have shot Captain Cornish’s Irish friend. Have you forgotten that ?”

“Not quite, sir ; nor will it grow very stale

before we meet again. I confess I long to have a shot at that fire-eater, although no man can think less of a duel than I do. It's a foolish appeal—the remnants of ancient barbarism in men, as jewels dangling from the ears are in women. Earrings are just as preposterous as nose-rings; and nothing but putting them through the noses of sows made the women ashamed of such gewgaws. But this Irishman is so fond of the sport that I would not deprive him of his chance of amusement for the world. And as for his long friend, by this time he has had enough of actions; and having always been ungrateful will now become vindictive."

The officers of the watch put an end to the game and the discourse by informing the captain that there was a vessel to the eastward. The captain jumped on deck; the doctor put by the chess-men and took a glass of Madeira before he followed, saying to himself, "Now a little amusement before going to bed would be very gratifying. We have had a mimic war, and now for a real one." In this however the fighting doctor was disappointed. The ship was always clear for action; and it required little time to stow the hammocks and get the men at quarters; but when hope was the highest, the private signal was shewn from the stranger; and at eleven o'clock the

Thames and the brig Pasley were in communication. The brig had brought despatches for the Thames, and with them an order to repair to Portsmouth instantly.

With the alacrity with which a good officer always obeys orders, however disagreeable, Captain Bowling made sail for his destination. The doctor, although cruelly disgusted that the stranger was a friend, made up his mind that as his captain had been fortunate through life, something might turn up in crossing the Bay of Biscay ; and, as in the sanguine and the ambitious, hope never dies until the man is absolutely dead, so the thought of another fight never was absent from the doctor, until the ship actually let go her anchor.

During her passage home, although the Bay of Biscay was crowded with vessels, the Thames only communicated with the Sylph, a brig, under the command of Captain Dashwood. This gallant little vessel had single handed attacked the Artemise, a large French frigate of forty-four guns and three hundred and fifty men. There are few actions on record which deserve to be handed down from sire to son in the navy more than this gallant affair. The Sylph, after having received several heavy broadsides from this powerful frigate, succeeded in obtaining a position within *pistol* shot on the weather-bow of the Artemise. For two

hours and five minutes did this pigmy assail the giant; and with such coolness and precision were her guns fired, with so much judgment was she manœuvred, that at the expiration of that time the Artemise wore and ran away, leaving the little Sylph with her standing and running rigging cut to pieces and unable to pursue.

Even Napoleon could not gloss over this affair—the facts were undeniable; the disgrace beyond all imagination. And in order to intimidate, since he could not conceal, the French captain was tried at a court-martial, and condemned to be shot for his miserable conduct on this occasion, which sentence Buonaparte approved, and ordered to be carried into execution.*

The doctor was greatly in requisition (not to assist the wounded, for incredible as it may appear, it is a fact that only *one* person was slightly wounded, and not one man killed). He shook every one of the officers by the hand; he envied the commonest landsmen on board; and he let out a very philosophical episode upon Fortune, in which he was not very complimentary to that goddess.

In every game of chess in which the captain and the doctor engaged, this action was always

* Marshal's Naval Biography, vol. ii. p. 456.

uppermost in the mind of the latter ; if ever he gave a check by a pawn to a bishop, or rook, or knight, he invariably said " The Sylph and Artemise, sir—just the same position ; perhaps you will be good enough to wear ship and run away." And then he would look at the pawn with admiration, and draw a comparison between the cutting out of the *Hermione* by Sir Edward Hamilton and this affair of the Sylph, quite at a loss to which to give the preference.

It was at Portsmouth that Bowling heard of the sad fate of Curlew ; and he was loud in his complaint against the crying injustice of pushing on men in the service who, never having learnt to obey, are unfit to command. Many a time when he attended at the passing of a midshipman, he remembered the mockery of the affair in Curlew's case ; and having seen with his own eyes how fretful and impatient those men become who, having no confidence in themselves, cannot repose it in others, he endeavoured conscientiously to do his duty, and never would sign a passing certificate without he had so much confidence in the midshipman that he would gladly have taken him for a lieutenant. This subject produced a conversation between the captain and the doctor ; and the latter cut it short by regretting Curlew's death, as he was down in the doctor's book for a little

satisfaction arising from the previous quarrel at the Cape of Good Hope. He rubbed his name out with some impatience, and regretted he could not arrange his quarrel without the interference of Death.

Bowling had prepared his letter for Susan, in which he announced his arrival, and gave some description of Sir James Saumarez's action. He desired her not to start to meet him, as in all probability the Thames would be ordered to sea immediately; and he concluded by saying he had a presentiment that, however close they might be, it would be some time before they met.

The doctor also had a letter written, and directed to the Irish gentleman at Captain Cornish's. It announced the arrival of the frigate, and expressed his readiness to meet his antagonist on South Sea beach, any or every morning, until one party was dead, or the ship sailed. He concluded by recommending that both should change their names, so that if they fought no one would be the wiser, and the recognizance would not be escheated.

No sooner was Bowling on shore, and had delivered his despatches, than he received the unwelcome news of the treaty of Amiens; and he was desired to hold the Thames in readiness to sail at a moment's warning. Lighters were ordered out with provisions; the guard-ship supplied various

necessaries; a tank brought out water; and in the busiest time of the war never was more despatch used. As the bum-boat woman, that seamen's morning newspaper, was allowed alongside, the news of the peace was soon over the ship. Some rubbed their hands with joy at the thought of being paid off, and being at liberty to spend their money on shore. Others, who had been seduced from their homes when young, now thought of their return to the cottage in which they had spent so many happy days. Some capered about the decks, talking of peace and plenty, liberty and the land. All were in high spirits; for news of any kind has a magical effect on the sailor. One man paced the deck in an unquiet mood: it was the doctor. His favourite avocation, like Othello's occupation, was gone. He lived only in the hope of war; and although the best-hearted fellow alive, he was, without exception, the most resolutely determined fighter the navy ever produced.

Neither did Bowling's appearance on board make the doctor easier in his mind. "We sail to-morrow," said the captain, as he came on board, "and I fancy we shall have a long run of it before we anchor again."

"What, sir," said the doctor, "and no time to get our linen washed?"

"Faith, doctor, the Admiralty care very little

about that. They think we can wash and wear as well as the fore-mast men."

"And your lovely Susan, sir!" added the doctor, with a smile. "What a delight it must be to have a wife, and never to see her! I should think she might as well have remained Miss Monckton as have married a sailor."

"There's nothing but disappointment in this life, doctor. I dare say you are as vexed as I am."

"I have sent an invitation to my Irish friend, and now I shall not be here to welcome him."

"Not without you can imitate the Irish bird, and be in two places at once. By the time he comes here, we shall be down the Channel, rattling away to a far shore. We are ordered to India, to take out the news of the peace, and we must make the best of our passage."

"Oh, murder!" ejaculated the doctor. No wine at Madeira, and no oranges at St. Jago! Not a drop of comfort at Teneriffe! No, nor any plantains, bananas, or quavers! Not a fight the whole blessed way! Not a prize, nor a cut out, nor a quarrel! And there are all those Tom Fools below singing about peace and plenty, and they are going to starve upon six-upon-four the whole blessed voyage. No man knows what is going to happen to him; and Nebuchadnezzar,

when he thought he was going to have a good dinner in his palace, took a seven years' salad in the field."

Bowling had time to write again to Susan. If he wished it, he could not have exchanged; for there was no time for anything. Twenty-four hours had not elapsed before the Thames was again under weigh. Discipline soon silenced all murmurs, and occupation soon restored the sailors' happiness: for they are not like other people, their natural home is on the waters; and when once the land recedes from the sight, they are pleased with their situations and resigned to their lot. The evening song on the forecastle; the occasional bull-dance to a miserable scrape on a cracked fiddle; a game at skylarks; swinging the monkey; crossing the line; and a slight variation in the way of exercise aloft in reefing;—their time goes pleasantly and rapidly. They have few wants, and require fewer comforts. All of their world is concentrated in the narrow dimensions of a ship; and when they return, after their long absence, the greatest happiness of which they are capable is within reach, and bounded in the narrow circumference of Common Hard or Plymouth Dock.

CHAPTER X.

IN WHICH THE RUBICON IS PASSED, AND A MORAL LESSON
INCULCATED.

AWAY went the Thames under a crowd of sail. Her orders were to make the best of her way to the Cape, and thence another vessel was to communicate the intelligence, and the Thames return to Portsmouth. "The sooner we are there, my lads," said the captain, as he gave his men an address upon their cruize, "the sooner we shall be back again;" a truth self-evident, but very consolatory from the mouth of the captain.

The fighting doctor was now driven to chess; and had no hope to live upon but his duel on his return. Days passed, the beautiful island of

Madeira, and its still more beautiful wine, was untouched ; the snow-topped Teneriffe was merely made at a vast distance ; the sans-culottes guard of St. Jago were undisturbed ; not a vessel was boarded though many were hailed ; the trade wind urged on the frigate until she was launched as it were into a dead calm, and approached the Equator.

“ At any rate now we shall have some fun,” said the doctor, “ and I’ll make up for lost time when we cross the line.”

“ It occurs to me, doctor,” said the third-lieutenant, “ that you have never crossed the line yourself.”

“ That won’t hinder me, I presume, from joining in the fun.”

“ Certainly not, *after* you are shaved.”

“ Shaved !” cried the indignant Esculapius, “ I should like to see the man who will shave me.”

“ That pleasure will be denied you, for you will be blindfolded.”

“ Indeed,” said the doctor, rubbing his hands, “ then I fancy I shall have one or two in my list from contusions directly after that event ; they wont shave me with impunity.”

“ Pooh, pooh,” exclaimed the lieutenant, “ you cannot stem a torrent ; you had better go quietly down the stream. Did you ever hear of a ship beating to windward against a hurricane ?”

"No," replied the doctor, "but I have heard of a vigorous defence of a small castle, and of the garrison being buried under its ruins; I'll shut myself up in my cabin, and they will not get me out of that without some desperate courage."

"Bless you," said the lieutenant, "they will draw you like a badger; and the more you kick, the more you'll be scraped. If you go quietly, like a sheep to the slaughter, they will only give you a taste of the lather and bundle you into the tub, out of which the sooner you scramble the better."

The doctor was a thorough gentleman, and he had no idea of being handled by such low hands as those of common seamen. He declared that if he felt disinclined to allow this privileged freedom on such an event, it arose principally from the right which seemed asserted, that he must be shaved *nolens volens*.

"It's all stuff," observed the master. "Give Neptune a gallon of rum, and he will allow you to shave his beard; otherwise, depend upon it, that you have got nothing that your loblolly-boy can mix half so beastly as you will taste."

"Very well," said the doctor, "it's a declaration of war; and in this war I must be successful. Their spite can only last an hour; mine may continue for six months."

The captain had crossed the line; so had the

doctor, although he was resolved to let them find it out. But captains very easily evade the orders of Neptune. The steward arranges all that in the morning, and the promise is fulfilled after the ceremonies are completed. On that day the ship may be said to be given up to the seamen. It is a day of riot, but the riot is controlled within certain bounds. It occupies their attention for days before the event, and is the theme of universal discussion. On that day an unpopular man may be made to ascertain the exact degree of unpopularity which he enjoys. It is a cloak under which the most malignant feelings may be gratified. It is a custom which has come down from antiquity, and this custom has grown into a law. A cruel, vindictive boatswain's mate is a sure victim; any one known to wear a white feather is another object; a sneaking, tale-bearing lad is likely to be corrected in quite a novel manner; and the bold, but determined tyrant is here overcome by numbers, and their revenge is gratified. Only those are safe from the worst part of the ceremony who have been shaved before, or who have made Neptune's acquaintance on the Equator. They scrape a little sometimes for the tropic of Cancer, but this toll-paying does not clear the Equator; but paying at the latter clears the barrier of Capricorn.

It is quite wonderful how accurately the seamen

know every man who has crossed before. It is almost impossible to deceive them. A sailor's memory, in regard to ships and stations, is as accurate as that of the historian who has fortified his chronology by a perfect knowledge of the *memoria technica*. It is in vain the liar seeks to establish his claim to pass free. He is questioned narrowly as to the ship he was in ; the year he crossed the line ; who commanded ; where she sailed from ; and it is a certainty that some one present is able to convict him. Out of the thousands who have endeavoured to evade the law, not ten have ever succeeded.

Now the doctor never attempted to conceal that he had not paid toll, although he had crossed the line ; for he was sick when the *Echo* crossed, and had never been shaved or paid forfeit. On the contrary, he loudly asserted he never had, and never would. He was a man universally respected for his courage. The crew would have followed him to the gates of the regions below, and would lend him a hand to take *Cerberus* away from his post. They all delighted in him when he was not in his dispensary. There he was "monarch of all he surveyed," and he settled his subjects in the following summary manner :—

" Well, Jones, what's the matter with you ?"

" I don't know, sir ; I feel a shivering all over

me. I've got a head-ache, and I feel so weak I cannot stand."

"Put out your tongue; hold out your hand. Ah! I'll take care of you. Go to your hammock." Jones was always an active man, and no skulker. The doctor would visit him five or six times, and pay him as much attention as if he were an admiral.

"What's the matter with you, Smith?" Smith was a regular dodge Pompey, always at hide-and-seek with the doctor and the purser's steward.

"I've just the same as Jones, sir."

"Let's see your tongue. Ah! your complaint is just beginning. Are you very cold?"

"Yes, sir, very."

"Swallow this:" a most diabolical mixture, in which every nastiness of the laboratory was mixed. "Now start off; run up and down the fore rigging until you're warm; then come to me, and I'll put a blister on your back, and bleed you for an hour. Away with you!"

"Well, Brown, what brings you here?"

"I've got a pain in my head, sir."

"Why, you rascal, you were drunk last night."

"Haven't been drunk, sir, for six months."

"Then you are a much greater fool than ever I thought you to be. It's a faint heart which never rejoices. What watch have you got to-night?"

"The first watch, sir."

“ I shall beg the officer of the watch to give you a look-out for the whole four hours. You will have no head-ache when you go to bed ; and if you have, you will sleep it off without physic. Now then, Green ?”

“ I’m troubled with fits, sir ; and I feel one’s a coming.”

“ So do I,” said the doctor. “ Carry him on deck as quick as you can ! Get fourteen buckets of water, and pour them over his mouth ! Look sharp ; he’ll begin to kick in a moment !” and away went Green for his shower-bath.

The doctor was always slow to believe a sailor ill, and he was much disliked from his first universal recipe, which was—a stoppage of grog. Some of the men had resolved to physic him on crossing the line ; and the doctor knew mankind well enough to calculate the measure of revenge which would be meted out to him. The captain had never spoken to him about this crossing ; and his being so great a favourite rather operated against than for him.

The day dawned, and the frigate was supposed to be about a mile from the Equator. The youngsters and idiots had been persuaded that the Equator was a line which ran round the world, or a cable to keep it from falling in halves ; and when the boobies went to look through the telescope, a rope-yarn had been introduced across the field-glass,

which satisfied some of the accuracy of the statement. But when the man at the mast-head call out that a boat was pulling towards the ship, all the novices were sent below ; as none but those who had been introduced to Neptune could receive him.

The doctor rose with a spirit of resistance quite worthy of the badger to which he had been likened. He was told the worse the clothes he put on, the better for the occasion. He then betook himself on deck, and his resolute countenance betokened his determination of resistance.

The sailors, although privileged to a certain extent, regarded the honour ever accorded to the quarter-deck ; and when the word was passed for all those who had not crossed the line to go on the lower deck, the doctor walked to the break of the quarter-deck, and gave a very significant look of pity at the quiet, sheep-like manner in which the order was obeyed. Some of Neptune's tipstiffs sat upon the combings of the hatchway to keep the rest below ; and when the same order extended itself to the officers, the doctor said that Neptune might go to a place where, if all reports are true, the king of the ocean would soon be high and dry : neither would he budge an inch.

Neptune was now seen advancing along the gangway, drawn on a carronade slide, enthroned amidst a profusion of swabs, and escorted by some

of his Tritons, dressed as nearly as possible to that natural suit which is easiest to the swimmer.

The captain entered into the frolic with much spirit; and on Neptune presenting him with a bottle of real sea-water, drawn from the lowest depth, where the plumb-line had never fathomed, and where the mermaids sported near the coral rocks, Bowling expressed his gratitude at renewing his acquaintance with the watery god, whose flipper he had shaken on board the Echo.

“There are some on board, Captain Bowling, who I believe have never seen my face before? and as they are my subjects, I shall desire to muster them.”

“Certainly, Mr. Neptune,” said Bowling; “and in the mean time, perhaps your majesty might wish to breakfast. Here is a bottle of rum, which I trust may be acceptable.”

“I think I see a face here,” observed Neptune, “which I have not seen before,” pointing to the doctor.

“He crossed your dominion with me in the Echo,” said the captain, “although I believe he was prevented from the honour of an introduction by sickness.”

“My secretary” (here a great, bushy-bearded tar came forward, holding a holy stone for a book,) “will see if his name is down as having presented his offering.”

“Can’t say that it is,” said Green. “He’s very fond of water, your majesty, and his name is down as one what’s done you brown, and put your subjects on six-water grog.”

All hands, captain and all, joined in the laugh, whilst the doctor’s whiskers seemed curling with anger.

“I shall make your acquaintance when I sit on my throne to receive strangers. Now to business, lads!” And away went Neptune, his escort dancing and singing in grotesque attitudes and hoarse voices, to the larboard gangway, where he took up his position on the bow of the cutter, which boat was half filled with water. The centre shifting thawt was removed, and placed head and stern, resting on the second thawt from aft, so as to make a balance. The fire-engine was placed in the launch, with a plentiful supply of water, and very willing hands to work the engine were ready to begin.

It is customary to commence with the midshipmen; but Neptune’s barber, whose lather is of the most unsavoury materials, only flourishes the razor, or, to a very unpopular one, gives a gentle scrape, and reminds him of his mortality by giving him an extra plunge into the water.

The doctor got near the gangway to witness the scene. His curiosity got the better of his prudence. The youngster who first came up was a

great favourite, and as he was placed blindfolded on the treacherous thawt, kept in its proper place by Neptune's executioner occupying the other end, he was observed to turn a little pale.

"Don't be frightened," said Neptune, "happy to make your acquaintance. Barber, don't you scratch his skin away to make his beard grow."

"No, your majesty," said the barber, passing a smooth iron hoop over his soft skin.

"How do you feel, sir, after your shave?"

Just as the youngster was about to answer, the executioner removed his weight, and smack went the youngster into the water. He was up in a minute, and was handed out of the boat, being told he was free. Whilst this was going on, the wash-deck tub had been brought alongside the mainmast, and the main-top men, or men who chose to occupy that station, had drawn up lots of buckets of water, intending, when the fun began, to deluge the people below. The doctor was directly under the top brim, and as nothing had occurred on deck to make the splash general, they delayed their attack.

Now came a boatswain's mate, a man detested by the crew, a great talker, a little doer, a savage at punishment, a spy, a reporter; his name was the signal for a general rush to the boat. He was placed on the plank, blindfolded by a wet swab.

The barber prepared his lather ; Neptune declared his beard too long, and forthwith the torment began. He was lathered with tar and other beastliness ; which being done, he was asked where he was born ?

He answered, " Stockport," a word which required the mouth to be a little open, which was no sooner opened than the barber rammed the long shaving brush into his mouth. The shout was universal at the wry faces the fellow made. He was now to be shaved ; and if he had marked the barber's back with a cat-o'-nine-tails, the barker took ample revenge by scraping his face with a notched hoop, and, as he said, he feared much that in getting rid of the lather he was obliged to take some of the skin also ; but that a little salt water would be found an excellent palliative. At this, souse went the victim ; and as the doctor grinned at the cruelty of the proceeding, the fire-engine played ; the water smacked right in the doctor's face and eyes, the maintop became a cataract ; and whilst he was fairly blinded from the unexpected attack, he was lifted into the cutter, and ducked most unmercifully. They bundled him out unceremoniously enough ; but it seemed as if all the powers had been concentrated against him, for bucket after bucket was poured upon him, and as he got on the main-deck endeavouring to

escape, he was met by a party of midshipmen, and some others of his own mess, who extinguished every spark of fire in his bosom by almost drowning him.

In this fun Bowling took part, and he only laughed as he got his share of the drenching. The doctor seeing that all opposition was useless, and being a powerful man, acted on the offensive against every one. He caught one youngster in his arms and put him head foremost into the wash-deck tub, and left him kicking his heels about, like a fellow standing on his noddle. He fitted a bucket on the master's head, and having now got his steam up, he resolved to be revenged upon Neptune and his barber. This was a profanation none but the hard-headed doctor could have dared; he waited his opportunity, jumped into the cutter, lathered the barber, threw all he could at Neptune, capsized the executioner, and made his escape, in spite of the volume which issued from the fire-engine, by crossing the launch and landing on the starboard gangway.

Neptune called upon his officers to fetch the delinquent; but the doctor made good his retreat below, and stood between two guns on the main-deck brandishing a handspike, and threatening destruction to all who dared approach him. Neptune, resolving not to suffer from the indignity,

ordered the fire-engine to be taken below, and from the other side of the deck wash the doctor out, whilst his myrmidons backed up the attack by hundreds of buckets. This was a water-spout attack, which might have swamped a jolly-boat in five minutes; but the doctor withstood it manfully; but finding himself sinking from the interminable, incessant dash of water on his face, he charged the fire-engine—in his impetuosity he fell, and a dozen men instantly seized him. Although Mr. Green was barber to his watery majesty, he did his office at this moment by deputy.

“He’s in a fit, lads!” said Green; “pour fourteen buckets of water over his mouth—that’s the right thing to be done, for he ordered the same to me.” The doctor was now very near a real faint; he had exerted himself to the utmost to recover his fall, and the exertion, with the everlasting sousing of water over his face, made him at last as resistless as a child.

“Hand him up,” said Green; “I’ll shave him!”

“You’ll do no such thing,” said Jones; “he’s had enough, and I’m blessed if any of you take him on deck!—Why he’s half dead now!”

“What’s this?” said the master, who came to see the fun.

“It’s the doctor, sir,” replied Jones; “he’s

nearly dead—and these beggars want to drown him !”

A rally of five midshipmen, who had possessed themselves of the fire-engine, soon drove the men from their victim; and the doctor was taken below, having just sense enough left to appreciate the moral of Gulliver amongst the Lilliputians, and to calculate accurately what chance a man has in a hornet's nest.

The shaving continued on deck until the water in the cutter was as dirty as that of a horse-pond after twenty animals have trampled in it. Still there was no abatement of punishment to the disliked; indeed, these were generally kept for the last. But whilst all this was carried on under the directions of the sovereign of the Trident, he himself was not free from everlasting assaults. Every now and then his beard would be unceremoniously profaned by being pulled by the barber, or washed by angry subjects: it hurt not his mimic majesty's feelings, seeing it was only a swab or a bundle of rope-yarns carefully combed out and tarred for the august ceremony.

Every man and boy in the ship took part in this frolic. Youngsters who could not carry a bucket walked about with a tin pannekin, which they dipped in every reservoir of water, and shied in the nearest man's face. No offence was committed by

this attack of youth upon age ; it was all fair play ; and no one mumped over his fallen dignity but the doctor, who, having dried and dressed himself, sat in his cabin with a pair of loaded pistols, and endeavoured to find consolation in books, in spite of the roar above him.

At last all were shaved and made free of the ocean for ever. Neptune had taken a pretty fair swig at the rum-bottle, and the executioner and barber were half drunk. It was after the last ceremony, when Neptune had been drawn round the deck, and had disappeared over the head as if gone to his coral depths, that one or two who had suffered the most caught hold of the barber and shaved him. Although this was stopped by the others on the score of custom and the necessary protection ever given to Neptune's officers, yet Master Green had got quite enough to satisfy him, that no man should be tyrannical without he is sure to be maintained in power ; that he had made more enemies in a day than he could either soothe or control in a year ; and many men in different situations might profit by Green's example, and learn that discretion and prudence are more likely to insure friendship than a momentary tyranny. The barber was never a favourite after that transaction.

From the moment the boatswain's call an-

nounced the order for all wet things to be hung upon the clothes-lines, from that second discipline was restored from all the riot of unlicensed liberty ; one moment was only required to restore authority. The decks were set to rights ; the officers appeared in their proper dresses ; the men were mustered in dry clothing ; the buckets, tubs, and every utensil used in this watery war, were restored to their places ;—and no one but those accustomed to such sights would believe how suddenly order and regulation overthrew riot and pleasure.

At quarters, not a man was found drunk. Neptune's eyes were a little bleared, but that was no doubt owing to salt water and a hot sun, his majesty not being much accustomed to be scorched. Green's face bore some signs of ill-usage ; and one or two of the men exhibited desperate ruts in the skin. The doctor walked the deck with the step of a giant, and with a look of anger which even the water had not quenched. There were no additions to his sick-list that evening ; he was in a cutting humour, and would have tried his lancet and scalpel upon any candidate for repose.

The topsails were reefed as usual after quarters ; and afterwards the fiddler and drummer were allowed to make a noise, to which the sailors were permitted to dance. There was no wind, or likelihood of any. The idle sail flapped heavily against

the mast, and the jib was undetermined which side to swell out. Some bottles of rum, which were mixed with water, were sent to Neptune and his assistants. There was a regular concert on the forecastle ; and Bowling, as he leant over the gangway of the fine frigate he commanded, listened to the rough song of the sailor, and thought of his early life when he had been sheltered by the weather bulwark, as the "hoarse wind made the treble and the bass" to the song of his own making, which he had been called upon to sing. The retrospection of life is never happy but where Fortune has smiled. It is sweet, we are told, to call back to our minds the happy moments of our youth ; but we are also told, that there is no greater pang than in the hour of misery and oppression to recall to our remembrance scenes of pleasure and of delight.

CHAPTER XI.

IN WHICH IS SHEWN HOW MUCH INJUSTICE THERE IS IN
OBTAINING JUSTICE ; AND A PROOF IS GIVEN OF
HUDIBRAS'S ASSERTION,—

“ So those blackguards who throw dirt
Do but defile, but cannot hurt.”

“ I THINK,” said Mr. Pouch, “ you had better consider the offer, Mr. Clasp, which I make to your client, without prejudice of course, and settle this business amicably.”

“ As far as I am concerned, Mr. Pouch, I have no objection. Many in my situation would urge on a trial, which must be a lucrative affair to me, since your client is sure of being cast ; but I am bound to say that all my persuasions with Mr. Boniface are useless. He seems resolved to have justice done him ; and as he is no longer a tenant

of your client, he feels himself released from the last spark of respect which otherwise he might have retained."

"Once more, Mr. Clasp: the inn in another village; all legal expenses paid; and a sum of ten pounds a year settled on the child."

"Ten pounds, Mr. Pouch, would not buy the child its shoes, or pay for a wet-nurse! Look at what you offer for this injury! A man in a thriving situation turned suddenly out, and others put in to make a fortune upon the very business he established! A family rendered disgraceful by the seduction of their daughter; that daughter ruined and cast away like the most loathsome weed, and in a state likely to increase the heavy burden which already presses upon her! For this you offer a public house in a village where there is no traffic, and ten pounds settled upon a child unborn! Suppose the child dies; what then?"

"Then of course the allowance would cease."

"I deal fairly with you, Mr. Pouch. I shall advise my client to reject the offer; and as the time is very close, I think no further communication can be requisite without a very different offer: such as, the reinstatement of Mr. Boniface, with a lease for his life; and at least one hundred a year settled on the daughter, and at her death to go to the child, should it survive."

Mr. Pouch rose, and waved his hand negatively, but positively. Such a proposition, it was thus signalised, could not be either proposed or accepted. The indignant Pouch, who had condescended much against his will to this interview at Clasp's cottage, rose in a dignified manner to withdraw; and Clasp, with all the conscious rectitude of a worthy man, escorted him to the outer door.

"Are we to proceed, Clasp?" said Pouch, thus unceremoniously taking off the handle of his name, and instituting a kind of familiarity never expected by Clasp. "Are we to proceed, my dear Clasp? Do you know, I doubt your success in this first attempt; and a defeat would be fatal to *your* prospects."

"My prospects, at this moment, are not the subject under consideration. It is my client's interest."

"You are rather young and green, Clasp," said Pouch, with a smile. "Believe me, in all cases in this world, however much the public may be hoodwinked under the large wrapper of honour, self is before every one, and sooner or later every one is sacrificed to self. I would not ask you to do anything dishonourable; but a right understanding between us might greatly advance ourselves."

"Why, Mr. Pouch, after your last remark I have only one to make, which is, that as I am

young and green I am inclined not to be overreached, if I can hinder it."

Mr. Pouch had not left the house ten minutes before the Irish gentleman requested to see Mr. Clasp. He was admitted.

"Clasp, my brave fellow," exclaimed the Hibernian to a man he had never addressed a word before to in his life, "I'm come from Captain Cornish just to arrange this law-suit without either counsel, judge, or jury. So listen to me for a few seconds."

"I really cannot, sir," said Clasp. "If any proposition is to be made, it must come through Captain Cornish's solicitor."

"Blood and ouns, man! Not listen to me! It's an insult never yet passed upon one of my name. Oh, my jewel! you'll listen to me with most uncommon attention when I invite you to a ball, and give you some music nearer your ear than ever was whistled before!"

Clasp took no notice of the intimation, but opened the door, and, bowing his enemy out, thought seriously of his case. He had taken a comprehensive view of the affair. The action was brought for breach of promise; there was a count for seduction; another for depriving the father of the services of the daughter. The first counsel on the circuit was

retained, and the court was likely to be crowded, as Captain Cornish was known to everybody; and although everybody shook hands with him, and everybody went to dinner when he was asked, yet everybody hated him, and a vast number despised him. Since Susan's marriage he had never been to Mrs. Talbot's. There he was sure to find the rector; and Cornish knew pretty exactly the opinion of that worthy man.

The court was crowded. The learned counsel opened the case, merely reciting the facts. A letter was produced in which an offer of marriage, when the unfortunate girl lingered on the balance of virtue, was made, was put in and read. Pouch was seen to whisper to the counsel he had engaged; who, as the witness, which was the girl herself, was about to leave the box, called out, "Stop, stop, young lady. Although my learned friend, Mr. Twister, has gleaned all he can from you, there is some information behind which, I dare say, you will be kind enough to impart to me. Have you ever seen Captain Cornish write?"

"No, sir," said the unfortunate girl.

"Pray, is his name to this letter?"

"No, sir."

"Then how do you know it came from him?"

"He spoke to me about the promise afterwards."

"Let us know, that's a sweet girl, what he said."

The poor girl was so confused that she could not connect her history properly, upon seeing which the learned Badger embarrassed her by changing his question a hundred times; which had the effect of throwing the girl into hysterics, in which state she was carried out of court, Mr. Badger assuring his lordship that it was quite requisite that she should be again placed in the witness-box.

"My lord," said Twister, "I have a witness in court who has received many communications from the defendant, and whose sacred character will entitle his evidence to the respect which it merits."

The rector was called, sworn, and placed in the box. Pouch jumped up and whispered to Badger, who nodded his head with some rapidity. The rector swore to the handwriting. He had received dozens of letters from the defendant, and he had no hesitation in saying that the handwriting was that of the defendant.

"You say, sir," said Badger, "that you have no hesitation in saying this is the handwriting of the defendant?"

"I have none whatever," replied the rector.

"Pray, sir, did you ever see him write?"

"Hundreds of times."

"Hundreds of times! Pray, sir, did you ever keep an account of the number?"

The rector mildly remarked that it was a figura-

tive mode of expression, by which he meant to say, "Very often."

"We do not deal in figures of speech here," said Badger. "You are sworn to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Now sir, I ask you, on your oath, have you seen him write hundreds of times?"

"No, sir, I have not."

"Why, you just now said you had, sir. Which am I to believe?"

"Whichever you like, sir," said the rector, with some gravity.

"You say, sir, you have received *dozens* of letters. How many dozens, sir, are you inclined to swear to?"

Mr. Twister interfered, and placed the witness under the protection of the judge. The judge remarked that the questions were not put with that courtesy usually accorded to witnesses whose words could not be doubted. But Badger, who was a low reptile, and who was well paid, looked unabashed at the rebuke of his lordship, and said he had a duty to perform to his client, which he should perform fearlessly; and took this opportunity of beginning to make some comments on the evidence: but he was stopped by Mr. Twister, and asked if he was going to make a speech.

"Well, sir," said Badger, "are you prepared to

swear that you have received ten dozen letters from the defendant?"

"No, I am not."

"Well, five dozen?"

"No, nor five dozen."

"Three dozen?"

"No, nor three."

"Two dozen?"

"Yes, I think I can conscientiously——"

"Oh, stop, sir! stop, sir! I don't ask you what you think, sir; I ask you what you *know*."

"I tell you I know this letter is in the handwriting of the defendant."

"Pray, sir, did you see him write it?"

"No, I did not."

"Then I ask you, sir, as a clergyman, as the rector of this parish, as a man to whom all ought to look up with respect, how can you swear that the letter was written by the defendant?"

"The witness, Mr. Badger," interrupted the judge, "intends to say, that to the best of his knowledge and belief, and by the appearance of the similarity between the handwritings, this letter was written by the defendant."

"I am sure," said Mr. Badger, with a most provoking curl of the lip, "that the reverend gentleman ought to be much indebted to your lordship for making him understand what he intends to say."

The testimony has hitherto been so contradictory that I am quite at a loss to understand what is intended; but I will try again, for the benefit of the gentlemen of the jury."

"Will you have the kindness," said Badger, putting on a most insinuating look, "to inform the gentlemen of the jury what *you do* intend to say?"

The rector could not be put out of humour; but with a smile quite worthy of his Christian character, he answered, "I will endeavour to explain."

"Oh! really, sir," said Badger, interrupting him, "this is too bad. If you are obliged to *endeavour* to explain, I apprehend the gentlemen of the jury cannot give much credence to your evidence."

"I must protest against this, my lord," said Twister; "it is very irregular."

"I shall not come to my learned friend," said Badger, rising with the storm which seemed brewing, "for any lesson of regularity. I do not know any one who brings so much his quarter-sessions practice into the court of assizes as my learned friend."

Here was a general bustle amongst the magistrates, who took the insult offered to Twister as applicable to themselves, in allowing their court to be a bear-garden.

"I certainly," said Twister, "do not feel the least

inclined to give lessons to so unpromising a pupil as my learned friend, for I never met with one less likely to do credit to his master."

"I am not likely, I think, to own my learned friend as my master in anything but impertinence, and in that I am not inclined to be his pupil "

Both now began to talk together in a style as disreputable as it was indecorous. The judge called them to order ; and after the excitement was a little subsided, Mr. Badger looked at the rector, and said, " Sir, I have been waiting this last quarter of an hour for your answer."

It was impossible to repress the merriment of the court and jury ; even the judge smiled at this remark ; and the rector added a little more to it by his remark, that he had been waiting about that time not to disturb counsel in the acting of their several parts. Badger could not, however, shake the testimony of the rector in regard to the writing ; so he set to work to shew that the rector was animated against Cornish, and questioned him as to a certain rencontre which took place between them. When he had failed in that, the poor girl was brought up again for torture. Now Badger attempted to ruin her character more completely than his client had effected ; and after having asked about her acquaintance with one or two boys, whom she admitted having kissed during the hay-making

season when she was about fourteen, Badger commenced again a new attack.

"I think," said Badger, "you are acquainted with a Captain Bowling who lodged at your house?"

"I have seen him," replied the girl.

"Seen him!—What do you mean to say you never *spoke* to him?"

"Yes, I have spoken to him."

"He's rather a good-looking man, I believe?" said Badger.

The girl was silent.

"Come, come, Miss Modesty, you need not be so very shy. Were you ever in the room alone with Captain Bowling?"

"Yes, I was, sir."

"And pray what were you doing there?"

"I took some paper he asked for."

"Why, surely, a young lady of your fashion and station was not a servant in your father's house?"

"I was not, but I went from curiosity to see him, as my father said he was the captain that had just fought a great battle."

"Well, my dear, I suppose you found out, as the poet says, 'Heroes in war are men, alas, in love?'"

"Sir!"

“Come now, did he not pat your hand—call you a pretty girl—and so on?”

“I believe he did, sir.”

“Believe!—don’t you know it as a fact?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Come now, no trifling; did he not kiss you?”

“He kissed my hand.”

“Oh!” cried Badger, laughing. “Gentlemen of the jury, he kissed her hand!—Sailors are more gallant than that generally, my girl; have you never found that out?”

“No, sir.”

“I presume you were more than fourteen when this happened?”

“Yes, sir, I was.”

“I don’t expect you to tell me any more; so you may go down.”

“Stop!” said Twister; who soon sifted out that the girl had told Cornish this during the time he made inquiries of her concerning Bowling, and that she had never mentioned it to any one but him.

Here now were these two men busily employed; the one, in proving that the girl was young, innocent, artless, seduced under a promise of marriage, having resisted all advances until love prompted credulity, and only fallen a sacrifice when her professed admirer had promised a secret

marriage; the other, in the most subtle manner, endeavouring to establish her as a low, wanton, loose, immoral woman, and turning the most trivial events into dark pictures of her mind and manners. And this was allowed, and is to this day tolerated in a place which is called a *court of justice*, in which an honest person's character is more blackened than in a coal-hole or a gin-palace.

Anything is allowed, any brow-beating of low-minded men, who, to gain their cause, are reckless of the path they pursue. And the confusion of innocence is glowingly painted as the proof of falsehood. But when Mr. Twister rose to reply, he armed himself with a laudable determination to do justice to his client, and to paint the defendant as nearly in his proper colour as his language would admit of. He went through the whole evidence; he dwelt upon the vindictive malice of Cornish; he pointed to the girl, and shewed the jury the innocent victim of a well-trained plan; he adverted to the meeting before the duel; the heartless and cruel desertion; the wreck of all her hopes; the distress of the parent; the ruin of all his exertions;—and in one of those powerful appeals which, being invigorated by truth, came home to the mind of all, he called upon the jury to give such heavy damages as would

convince every man that the rich were not above the law, or the wealthy able to control it.

The judge (England's greatest glory is the upright, the untainted, unsullied honour of her judges) did his duty. And Cornish slunk away, the object of pity and contempt, as the learned man summed up and commented upon the case. Neither did Mr. Badger escape unscathed for his low, disreputable conduct. "There can be no doubt," said the learned judge, "but that the poor girl fell a victim to a promise often repeated of a private marriage; and the defendant must for ever bear about with him the consciousness of having inflicted the most grievous injury upon a fellow-creature of which man is capable; of having left her, who sacrificed her honour to a belief in his, a by-word and a scorn—and of having, in defending the action, only aggravated her misfortune by the publicity it produces. Gentlemen of the jury, this case is clear;—a more disgraceful case never occupied a court of justice—and you will best shew your feelings on this occasion by the amount of damages you award."

This last hint was quite sufficient for the jury; they returned damages—fifteen hundred pounds. The judge gave an order for the affiliation of the child; and Cornish had the gratification of under-

standing that Boniface had entered another action against him, in consequence of unguarded expressions, of conspiracy to ruin him in trade. The case created a great sensation in the county. Clasp was a made man; and Cornish crept away with his Irish friend to a distant part of the country, until the storm should blow over.

CHAPTER XII.

IN WHICH THERE IS MUCH PHILOSOPHY ON MARRIAGE, AND
AN UNCOMFORTABLE SWIM BY STAR-LIGHT.

THE Thames soon executed her orders ; but owing to the admiral having no ship at the Cape, the Thames was ordered on to Madras. This prolonged separation afforded the doctor sufficient scope for his railing against marriage ; and even Bowling began to think he had done a hasty thing, although his love was as fierce as ever, perhaps, indeed, a little warmer from his provoking absence, when nothing could be done at sea ; and a cruize ashore, and vegetable diet, might be useful and beneficial.

The doctor never let an opportunity slip of

commenting upon the folly and inconsistency of marriages so hastily formed, and which, when carried into effect by people of the same age, was seldom productive of happiness.

“If I were first lord of the Admiralty,” said he, “I would never employ a married man ;—no officer on service should be married to anything but his ship.”

“Doctor, you have told me so a dozen times. I’m married now, and cannot be unmarried.”

“More’s the pity—you would make a splendid admiral ; but all admirals get wives, and then they look after the cottage on shore more than the cabin afloat.”

“What think you of Nelson ?”

“Why he is the best man to prove my position.”

“And Collingwood ?”

“Exceptions to prove the rule.”

“You will be married yourself, doctor, before long. I never heard a man who was so fierce against the sin of matrimony who did not commit it.”

“I should just as soon think of taking a cobra capello, without drawing his swivel teeth, for a pet, as a woman for an everlasting companion ;—do you ever get a chance of saying a word, or is it not always a one-sided argument ?”

“ Bless you, doctor !” said Bowling, as his heart was warmed with the question, “ if she were to speak for a week I should consider it too short a time, and ask her to go on for a fortnight. Why I live upon her words !”

“ Very bad food for nourishment, rely upon it—neither farinaceous nor fattening ;—those who talk much seldom talk well. A jaw-me-dead in a man is detestable, and in a woman insupportable.”

“ Come, doctor, as we play this game, tell me what has made you such an enemy to the sex ? None but the brave deserve the fair ;—if so, you merit the fairest that ever was born.”

“ I’m afraid, sir, Miss Susan taught you how to say pretty things, as well as your prayers ; but I will tell you why I call out against officers marrying.”

“ Go on, doctor—move first—you won the last game.”

“ When I was about twenty-five, I made a fool of myself in earnest ; I had been many times before a considerable donkey, but then I really made an ass of myself. I made a woman an offer.”

“ And she refused you, and thus soured your temper in that respect.”

“ Not so, sir ; she accepted me, and I was to do penance for a year ; at the expiration of that time,

if I was of the same mind, we were to be made happy, as poets and paragraphs in the papers assert. Away I went to sea—love-sick, moping about the deck like a squeamish passenger, doing nothing myself, and hindering every one else from being employed. The captain had been made happy ten years before, and miserable ever since. Whenever he was at sea, he grew lively and cheerful; but as we got into the latitude of $49^{\circ} 57'$, and began to look out for the Lizard, then he began to grow as cloudy as a November morning in London—all his spirits evaporated. And when the man at the mast-head called out ‘Land on the lee bow!’ and every one of us nearly jumped sky-high at the thought of getting into an English anchorage, it was as good as three dozen to him if he got in the report between that and our sailing again. The fact was, the captain would as soon have seen the devil as his wife. He had three children, to whom he was much attached, and whom his wife seemed to detest as much as himself. We were cruizing in the bay—(you cannot move the knight, it discovers check)—when a strange sail was discovered; we chased gallantly enough, and the vessel succeeded in getting into the Garonne; but as we hauled off, giving up that chase, we saw a convoy of *chasse marées* creeping along the coast. Away we went after them—(check to

the king and castle).—No sooner did they see us, than they all huddled together under a small fort ; and we stood in well within gun-shot, which being intimated to us by the arrival of one of those iron messengers of war on board, we tacked and stood out again.

“ Every one began to wonder what was to be done ;— the first lieutenant suggested the boats ; the master said he knew the coast well, and that there was ample water for the frigate close to the fort, which was a miserable concern, and which could not stand against the frigate five minutes. The captain was poor, the prize tempting, if they could be brought out, but useless to him if they were to be destroyed. Then came the balance of chances against certainty of success ; such as, when unmarried, you never thought of at Martinique ; then came the fear of being killed, and of leaving three children to a mother that hated them ; and the fear of being wounded and sent on shore, there to be tenderly nursed by a wife who would have tormented his soul out, and made death preferable to a life of everlasting annoyance. It was a struggle between cupidity and prudence ; and prudence won the battle, and we made sail without attempting to destroy one of the thirty-four vessels well within our power. That’s the reason why I never liked married captains, who

are looking after their children and not after the enemy's vessels; we might have had as pretty a morning's entertainment with that battery as I could have wished. And a few French soldiers who came down to the fort would no doubt have kept us alive if we had attempted to land."

"But doctor," said Bowling, "I have read that a man, when he marries, becomes more attached to his country, and a better subject."

"That is, if he is attached to his wife, and lives on shore. If he is desperately in love, he keeps out of danger for fear of an accident; if he is not, he will not make prize-money, lest his wife should expect a new bonnet."

In this manner the evenings passed. The doctor and the captain always played at chess; and whenever the captain spoke of the joys of returning home, the doctor turned Job's comforter, and related about a dozen instances in which that joy had been blighted for a moment, on the discovery that the wife had walked off with some one else during the husband's absence. He was prolific of anecdotes, all tending to discourage matrimony, and to shew the blessings of liberty.

"Why, sir," said he, "ever since you married I consider myself a better, because I am a freer man. I ride at single anchor; you are moored. I start when I like; you must veer away upon the small

bower-cable of your wife's, before you can heave in the best bower of your own wishes. And then, you see, sometimes a squall comes on ; the small bower parts ; and away you go to sea, with the cable sticking out of your hawse-hole, but no arms and crown to the anchor to check you (Solomon says a good wife is a *crown* to a husband), or bring you up hard and fast on the good holding-ground of marriage." In this manner did the doctor take a delight in tormenting his captain, and at the same time continuing his game of chess, which he almost invariably won.

Madras roads were soon left without a ship. The Thames was on her voyage to England, and every stitch of canvas was crowded to get home. It was evening—one of those delightful evenings when the stars appear to have come down from their high situations, and to have neared the earth. The ship was going at the rate of eight knots, and every heart seemed rejoicing at the return to England. On the fore-castle the usual group of seamen had assembled ; the rough-looking tar, with a voice as deep as the Atlantic, sung the old and favourite song, "To England when with favouring gale," whilst all around joined in the chorus which announced the "soundings" gained, as the ship, under the pilot's charge, neared her harbour. It must be a sailor, for none but sailors are accustomed to the

sound, to estimate the correct notes as the leadsman calls "By the mark seven;" and the man who set the song to music has so beautifully transferred to music the rough notes of the sailor, that any one might believe, as the song was sung, that it was in reality a man in the chains calling out the soundings. That has ever been, and ever will be, a favourite song; and no sooner is it ended than all the sailors, who look forward to an hour's liberty after years of prison ship discipline, make their remarks thus:—

"Well sung, Tom! I'm blessed if I don't see the guard-ship at Spithead, and the bumboat woman with her soft tack (fresh bread) before me now."

"How we will spin up Channel, my lads," said another, "when the girls get hold of the hawser, and tow her along!"

"I shall see little Fanny again," said another, a shade more sentimental than the Caliban who loved the whole sex.

"What a lark we will have at the Jolly Tar!" said another.

Whilst another, on whom the chorus of the song still seemed like inspiration, called out, "By the-mark seven!" The flying jib was at this time hauled down, and ordered to be stowed. Green, who, for once in his life, was willing to do the duty

of another, volunteered, with one of the forecastle men, to go out and stow the flying jib, leaving the group to continue their songs.

By some accident Green, who was never very active, slipped overboard. The forecastle man, who had just turned round to speak to him, saw the accident, and called out, loud enough to be heard at the taffrail, "A man overboard!" A hundred eyes were instantly on the alert to catch sight of the unfortunate man; and as the ship rounded to on the starboard tack, Neptune's barber was seen on the weather quarter. The doctor and the captain were at their usual chess; but as the sounds reached them, all respect on one hand, and courtesy on the other, was forgotten in the hurry to rush on deck.

"A man can't be drowned such a night as this," said the doctor.

"There he is, sir."

"Lower the quarter boat."

"Is that fore-mast tackle clear?"

"Cut away the gripes."

"Lower away abaft!"

It was a glorious confusion. The best-disciplined ship in the navy cannot be kept in order under such excitement.

"There's another man overboard," said one of the youngsters; but his voice was scarcely audible.

In the mean time, the first man was lost sight of; and it having been ascertained that he fell from the flying-jib boom, it was presumed the frigate passed over him, and that, although every exertion was made, yet it was fruitless. The second man, who leaped overboard, had previously thrown a grating, and this he pushed before him, whilst he struck out vigorously in the direction he imagined Green to be; and Green, who swam pretty well, called out lustily, the sound of his voice being heard by him who came to his rescue. Still, although enabled to keep above water, the poor fellow was fast failing. He had been forced pretty well under water, and kept there some time previous to his rising clear of the ship.

“Quick, quick!” he exclaimed, “or I must sink!”

“Courage! courage, my lad!” cried the advancing man. “Keep up your spirits; here’s a grating, and the boat’s coming. Who are you?”

“William Green,” said the man.

“The devil you are!” cried the doctor, checking the grating, which was close to the man. “You and I have an account to square, and I think I’ll give you time to wash the lather off your face.”

“Oh, sir! for God’s sake, help! I’m sinking; I am!”

The doctor saw that Green was more frightened

than hurt, and judged from his exertions that he was capable of much more. He indulged him with a few remarks upon his tyranny, and added that he was afraid he must keep the grating for himself, as it would only carry one, and that he, the doctor, was of more value on board than a skulking gentleman subject to fits.

At last, however, Green began to shew evident symptoms of being done up, and the doctor pushed him the grating, on which he managed to float with considerable difficulty, although he was quite aware, from the security he felt, that he could hold on a quarter of an hour, if requisite: for, to a swimmer there is nothing more easy to manage than a grating. The doctor kept close to him, never venturing too near what he considered a drowning man, but one who had again deceived him; for Green, a cowardly fellow by nature, had pretended more exhaustion than he experienced, and, having got upon the grating, was resolved to keep there.

In the mean time, the boat had left the ship, and, with the desperate eagerness of sailors who strive to save a shipmate, pulled with all their hearts and souls to the rescue. But they were going far away from the place; the wind was pretty fresh; the noise of the water, with the encouraging yell of the sailors, completely drowned the cries of the

doctor; and those of Green, whose lungs were in excellent order, were alike unheard. To the great dismay of both, the boat, on arriving at what they believed the distance the men should be, made a sweep in a contrary direction, and then went fairly out of sight and hearing, even had it been a calm.

"This is but bad work, Green," observed the doctor, "and that blue light which the ship now burns may be the last we shall ever see. I am getting rather tired; the grating will bear us both up, if we keep cool."

"If you come near it," cried Green, the fear of death at once overcoming all the restraint of discipline, "I'll drown you."

"Then we must have a fight for it," said the doctor; "and I warn you, that if I am successful you may drown without my assistance." The doctor was not a man to threaten without putting the threat into execution. The possession of the grating was the forlorn hope, the straw at which drowning men catch, and clutch as if it would save them from the gaping grave beneath. Green had placed the grating under him, and was lying on it, perfectly restored from his first fatigue. The doctor, who had generously risked his life for the worthless cur, was strong enough in heart to fight for the only chance left of salvation, and he struck out for the affray. Green endeavoured to stop him

by splashing the water in his face as he advanced, and many a swimmer has found how efficacious a mode it is of repelling an adversary ; but the doctor was not to be kept back by some drops of water. He seized the grating, and felt at the same moment the fearful clutch of Green, who seized his hair. A moment's thought convinced the doctor both were lost, if he persevered ; for Green would, in losing the grating, have clung to him, and both must have sunk. He therefore only rested his hands upon the grating ; and in this manner both, believing their death inevitable, retained their holds.

The boat's crew were not easily turned from their object. They made a circle in the proper direction, and when they came, even at the last moment, to the assistance of their comrades, Green would not release his hold of the doctor's hair, fearing that he might slip from the grating and be drowned. Both, perfectly exhausted, were lifted into the boat, and rescued ; but even the shout, the cheers that welcomed the doctor's return, were unheard, for he had fainted from the fatigue.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN WHICH IS SHEWN THAT ALL BALLS ARE NOT FRIENDLY RENCONTRES, AND THAT THE GRAPE IS HARD TO SWALLOW.

SINCE Mr. Harrison had heard of his son's existence, he had, if anything, passed a more wretched time than when he was in uncertainty. Fate seemed resolved to torment him ; the evidence of the German doctor and the attorney was sufficient, with the production of Hanson's last will, to satisfy the doubting mind of even the mother. And when this was done, and the Thames had sailed for India, the two worthy companions drove their gig up to town ; the former amusing every one by his good-humour, and the numerous mistakes he occasioned, and the latter wonderfully

the better for Mrs. Talbot's hospitality. Bowling's letter intimating his departure, in which not a word was mentioned of Susan's, which was about this time at Gibraltar, convinced her that her husband had sailed without knowing one word of the mystery he most wished to have unravelled.

It was impossible for any man to have welcomed a daughter-in-law with more rapture than did Harrison his son's wife. In Susan he saw every perfection and beauty; and the man who before in his grief had lived the life of retirement, now shared in every amusement, and lavished money upon Susan with a liberality that seemed exhaustless. Few indeed were her wants; the hospitality of Mrs. Talbot was ample for her; but the drawing her mother-in-law from the seclusion she had so long practised gave her sufficient employment. Harrison himself soon grew friendly with the world; but his wife, suffering under that most painful infirmity, deafness, and having so long lived retired, seemed to have fallen into the nervous timidity of a child, and still loved seclusion more than the cheerful companionship of her daughter-in-law.

At this time the country was as dull as even Mr. Harrison a short-time back could have desired. The departure of the German doctor and deferential attorney had left Mrs. Talbot's house

apparently far more dreary than it was before. The night looks darker when the flash of lightning has illuminated it for a second.

Cornish and the wild Irish gentleman had departed after the trial ; and the conversation at the church-porch after service of an intended ball seemed one of the only occasions for some conversation and a little hope. The rector, Mrs. Talbot, and Susan, resolved to go. It was a charity ball ; and therefore it was concluded by the most straight-laced that their going was excusable, if not unobjectionable. Tickets were five shillings, tea included ; and the whole county seemed desirous of getting a little exercise and some amusement at this trifling charge.

Susan knew that the rector was about to propose a union between himself and the widow, and she saw that her friend would not be so hard-hearted as to be likely to cause the good-natured man the least pain. That was a marriage in perspective, which was most industriously circulated as a profound secret ;—no one was to tell it to his neighbour until it was discovered that the clerk, the bell-ringer, the sexton, and the whole parish, talked of it always as a secret every one knew, and no one betrayed. The ball was to come first, and at it Mr. Harrison was easily persuaded to attend, although, till very recently, for twenty-

two years he had never indulged in the charms of society. And on this occasion the rector assured him that a cheerful countenance, and a modest participation in the pleasures of the world, were more acceptable to the Father of the fatherless than a sad and sullen demeanour, which appeared to groan under the dispensations of Providence, unreconciled to its will.

When the first country-dance was played, every lady seemed anxious to maintain her rank; and there was a little difficulty in reconciling all to their several places. The master of the ceremonies knew the exact relationship to any peerage or baronetage enjoyed by the different spinsters, and the grade of each officer in the army and navy who had left his widow, wife, or daughter, to adorn a county ball. But he was sadly puzzled when he saw a bustling, vulgar-looking, though pretty woman, placing herself, in spite of some delicate opposition amongst those whose places were as well known as the mile-stones. Susan stood up; her rank was readily accorded her. And next to her came the bustling busybody.

“Here we is has near has needs be!” said the lady, who might have been indulging in the juice of the grape. “Step a little lower down, if you please, miss;—make way, Guardo! don’t you see a stationer a coming, as my husband says?”

She had no necessity for appealing to either side of her; her opening discourse soon procured her room enough. Those above took a step and a half to the left, and those to the right descended half a pace. The gentleman who danced with the lady one below her maintained his place, and would not give way an inch; whilst a lady close by, observing the forward manner of the *lady*, requested the master of the ceremonies to make her acquainted with her proper situation.

There was a little confusion concerning this interloper; but it was evident she was not to be unshipped by any master of the ceremonies.

In the mean time the lady, having fought her own battles, was now busily employed fighting those of her partner.

“Vhy don’t you stand hopposite to me, you odmigog, you! Lawks me! if my husband vas honly a dancing with me, he’d take his place as he did Martinique!”

Susan hearing this, and believing some honour and glory belonged to her husband for that deed, looked round rather briskly; when, to her indescribable annoyance, she was thus saluted:—

“Why my!—if it isn’t Susan Monckton, has I’m alive! Well, miss, you do look as pretty as ever! And how’s your lover—that Captain Cornish?—ay, he was a sly one; many’s the wink he

gave me when he was a gulling you, as my husband says. Lord love you! those soldiers tell more lies in a day when they are a courting, than a sailor tells in a year, when he's a love-making. Oh, here's my usband! There, Watson, there's Susan Monckton!"

Often enough had Betsy Weller, the former lady's maid of Rosa Talbot, talked to her husband *now* of the beauty of Susan, and with that eye of admiration which, thank God, most sailors possess for the beautiful, in whatsoever country it may exist, Watson turned to look upon the girl to whom he had been so unceremoniously introduced. Susan, willing to avoid this Caliban, who had evidently taken in his provisions and wine for a twelve hours' cruize, made a dignified curtsy as she answered that her name was Bowling, and that she was the wife of Captain Bowling of the navy.

"Wife of Tom Bowling!" cried Watson. "Tip us your flipper!—I've been a messmate and a shipmate with Tom Bowling. And many's the time we've drank the health of black-eyed Susan, as he used to sing; let's see, ay, the last line was, 'Believe me, dear Susan, I'll come back again.' Don't you go capering down this room like a Spanish horse at a short canter, but come along-side of me, and I'll tell you how Tom and I swam

ashore at Martinique ; how we scaled the fort, pitched the Crapeaux over the parapets, and gave them a swim in a herring-pond they never much liked."

Quite in vain did Mrs. Bowling decline the honour of listening to the glorious achievements even of her husband. The whole room were attracted by the boisterous manner of Watson, who was in uniform, and consequently most generally observed by the ladies.

" Oh my !" said the forward Betsy Watson, who never had forgiven the pretty Susan for her sudden discharge from Rosa's service, although that discharge had been the cause of her marriage, " what, married another ?—how that Cornish must grin to be sure ! That's about the third, as I know, that he's passed off. Well, it's very lucky ; and I says nothing, nothing but this, that there's many a man what goes to market and buys stale vegetables for fresh ones. It's no business of mine, so mum's the word."

This insolent remark, and the well-known character of Cornish, excited some whispers, all loud enough to be heard ; for when scandal *whispers*, she whispers through a speaking trumpet. Harrison heard more than one which seemed to convey this kind of idea : " A fortunate occurrence is a well-timed marriage."—" There's no smoke with-

out fire." And Susan could not but understand the malicious slander of this worthless woman, who had carefully nursed her revenge against the most innocent creature alive. Susan went instantly to Mrs. Talbot, who was at that moment so engaged in conversation that, for the first time in her life, she did not rejoice at hearing Susan's voice. The rector also, who wore a more earnest countenance, gave a look which clearly indicated his wish.

"Why, there's that Missus Talbot!" said Mrs. Watson, "as fine as a peacock. That's all false hair—every curl of it; for when her wig's off, she's as bald as my hand!"

Mrs. Talbot heard not this blight upon her head; but on Mrs. Watson being pointed out to her, and having heard the insolent remark, she desired the rector to communicate to the master of the ceremonies that the intruder was her former maid, dismissed from her service for impertinence and slander.

"Very sorry to hear it," said Mr. Tiptoes, "but I cannot interfere. She is the wife of a lieutenant in the navy, and was mentioned by Captain Cornish to me yesterday, just before he went to London, as an amiable young woman, occupying a good position in life."

"Then, as I do not choose to be in the same

society as that of my maid," said Mrs. Talbot, "I shall instantly retire. Have the kindness to order my carriage."

"All pleasure preconceived or preconcerted," says Johnson, "ends in disappointment," and so it proved, first, as to going to the ball, and secondly, in getting away from it. The comforts of a country ball are somewhat counterbalanced by the distance one has to go, and the fatigue of returning. Mrs. Talbot's servant, believing that he should not be wanted until one o'clock, had betaken himself to some obscure public-house, with the proprietor of which he was acquainted. And one hour elapsed before he was ready.

In the mean time, Watson, who was a cloth or two on the wind, but who yet could carry his canvas without reeling under it, would not leave the wife of his old friend and commander; and his was the warm and generous feeling of a sailor towards what he called a ship which had parted from her convoy, and might get out of her reckoning. Harrison could not understand the acquaintance, and perhaps was a little more puzzled owing to his long absence from the world, when he heard Watson ask Susan, in reference to him, "What *galoot* that was?" Mrs. Watson, having taken a little revenge, took a dance. She was a pretty woman, with what sailors call a

larking countenance. She had large dark eyes, very lively in their glance, and very comprehensive in their meaning. She was therefore no wall-flower; the young men all preferring that careless abandonment of manner to the distant coldness, the aristocratic reserve of less talkative partners.

Every one in the room knew Cornish, both by acquaintance and by character, so that Mrs. Watson's insinuations against poor Susan obtained some credit, more especially as the fields and the lanes were so accurately described that they gave a semblance of truth to the scandal; besides which, Mrs. Watson could have no reason for such assertions.

"Ay!" said the artful woman, rubbing up a little sentiment, "it aint all gold as glitters; your violet is not so modest, though it grows in concealment, but what a wasp will find it out; and if you clap a peacock's head and tail on the cuckoo, it would look mighty fine until it was plucked." Her quaint manner, the volubility of her words, and the excessive jumble of vulgarity and fag ends of old sentiments, rather amused than charmed her partners.

"Short and sweet!" she said to her partner, as the country-dance finished, which had kept the fiddlers at work for an hour. "It's a long lane that's got no turning; little said is soon mended; short horse is easy carried; small potatoes fill a sack; and one jay chatters more than forty sparrows.

Well, I should *just* like to know what my husband is poking about there with that fortunate woman, Mrs. Bowling! As I'm alive, he's giving her his arm!"

It was all true. Watson, who considered it his duty to attend on a shipmate's wife, and who would have fought forty battles in such a holy cause, heard Mrs. Talbot's carriage announced, and saw Harrison come forward to offer his assistance.

"I ask your pardon, old gentleman," said Watson, meaning to be very polite, "but you need not shove your oar in where there is no rowlock. A messmate before a shipmate, you know; a shipmate before a stranger; a stranger before a dog; and a dog before a marine. Hook on, Mrs. Bowling! The commodore's a long way ahead:" and Susan, rather than make a scene, took the proffered arm and walked through the room; but as she came near the door, Mrs. Watson begged to interfere.

"Come, Watson," said the impudent jade, "none of your cruising, as you say, where you're not stationed. Don't you be trying, with your old grey noddle, to cut out my friend, Captain Cornish." But Watson passed on, and, having placed her in the carriage, gave the rector a lift in; but when Harrison offered himself, he put his arm across the door: "Avast heaving, old gentleman! Never

more than eight in a mess, you know, and one in a hammock. The hold's full, and there's no more stowage."

"Come in, Mr. Harrison," said Susan, anxious to leave the hated house.

"I'll strike him down below," said Watson, alluding to the stowage of a water-cask on board a ship. "He'll do well enough for a ground-tier butt; or you may make shifting ballast of him, if the ship sails too much by the head. Good night, Mrs. Bowling! Tell your gallant husband that I've been across your hawse; and that old Watson drinks his health, and success to the heroes of Martinique, every night in old Jamaica. Come, you chap in the fore-top (alluding to the coachman), make sail, and mind your steerage through the town; and don't get yawing about, like a brig in a high sea! There! starboard a little; and take care of the beacon!"

"Why, I'm blessed," added the rough sailor, as he watched the course of the vehicle, "if he has not run his own figure-head right against the swinging-sign. Port, hard, old boy! You'll be foul of that craft on the starboard bow. You had better heave all aback, and get a pilot on board; for I suspect you've been splicing the main-brace once or twice. Slap on board of him, by the Lord Harry! Mind your weather helm, you lubberly scoundrel! There

goes the bowsprit end smack into the after cabin! Pooped, by Jove! and one of the after-guard knocked over the quarter-gallery!"

The coachman was drunk; and in endeavouring to get clear of the carriages he had run against one, whilst another before him suddenly backed, which brought the pole of Mrs. Talbot's carriage in contact with the footman's legs, (Watson called the footman "the after-guard,") who, to save himself, jumped over the hinder wheel. This is the interpretation of Watson's remarks, for the benefit of those not conversant in nautical phraseology.

Susan had borne up against the infliction of her new acquaintance with all the spirit she could muster; but the fright coming before she could recover herself, and her ears still catching the jargon of Watson—who, poor fellow, did all with the best possible intention, although not in the most elegant manner—she fainted. The coachman got clear of the crowd, and then in reality followed Watson's directions; for he made all sail, and drove furiously home, lodging the whole party in a comfortable ditch, just below the cottage which Susan had converted into a school.

"Now, old gentleman!" said Mrs. Watson, as her husband returned, "I'm quits with those creatures; and so I'm contented to go on to Mount's

Bay to-morrow. But who'd a thought of such an old fool as you running and gallivanting after the girls? Oh fie, Mr. Watson! fie for shame of you! Come along home! Good night to you, Mr. What-do-you-call-yourself! Oh fie! fie! fie!"

CHAPTER XIV.

“ Poor child of danger ! nursling of the storm !
Sad are the woes that wreck thy manly form !
Rocks, waves, and winds the shatter’d bark delay ;
Thy heart is sad, thy home is far away !”

CAMPBELL.

THE doctor, who to the last, for all he knew, died fighting, slowly recovered by the active treatment recommended by his assistant, who looked upon his recovery as disgustingly certain. A death vacancy is a very comfortable space, soon filled up ; but in this case, not even an expectant assistant surgeon, remarkably sanguine men in general, could hope for such a desirable end. No sooner was he well than he remembered the kind intentions of Green to drown him rather than hazard, in the

slightest degree, his own life. "I'll settle that with him," he said, "when the ship's paid off."

As the Thames drew nearer to England, an universal excitement prevailed. For a wonder, it was still peace. The two most quarrelsome nations in the world were taking breath before they went in for a finish. John Bull was mustering up his giant resources, whilst John Crapeaux was looking out for a good opportunity of hopping into the water.

"Well, master," said Bowling, rubbing his hands, "what do you make the latitude?"

"Forty-eight fifty-six, sir."

"Only sixty miles from the Lizard, doctor," he continued. "The breeze is fair, although it is light; and by sunset we may yet make the land, or see the light before eleven. Blow, blow, my good breeze!" and Bowling, following an old superstition of sailors, began to whistle for a wind.

The doctor was in high spirits also. He had had enough of sailing about the world, doing nothing but physicking the sick and plaistering the wounded. There had been no pleasurable excitement in the way of amputations; and he seriously intended to cut the concern altogether, without more active operations were pursued. He hated the very word "peace;" he declared England could never repose for a moment whilst Napoleon existed;

and oftentimes read, with the eye of prophecy, the forthcoming events, as Collingwood actually predicted the very plan for the co-operation of the French and Spanish fleets which the Emperor contemplated, and which he afterwards attempted to carry into effect. Collingwood's remarkable letter is equal to any foretold event on record.

The wind grew lighter as the sun went down. The seamen sang their songs with more than usual glee, and a little grog made the notes of each voice a little deeper and a little merrier.

“Poor child of danger! nursling of the storm!” Such indeed is the thoughtless, fearless sailor. To him no thought of poverty in age ever occurs; the present hour alone is made for him. The experience of the past vanishes with the event; and futurity, or the stormy, lowering evening of life, when man becomes as helpless as in infancy, never occupies his thoughts or disturbs his repose. His existence is bounded by to-morrow. He sees no further than the termination of his cruize, and all plans for his existence extend but to that duration. He has no golden visions to cheer the decline of life, Greenwich alone excepted; and his text and his motto may be summed up in the scriptural command, “Sufficient for the day be the evil thereof.”

Now, for a moment, all was excitement, attended with many a bright ray of hope for pleasure to come;

but who could imagine human nature to be so little ambitious as to figure pleasure in so humble a garb ? For the chief enjoyment to which the men looked forward was a dance at the back of Point or Common Hard—a glorious jollification, in which the participators and originators were alike degraded. Money was a dross ; the hard-earned wages of years would be dissipated in a night ; and he who had combated the storms, and stood boldly against his country's foes, would awake from the heavy sleep of intoxication a pauper and a fool, again to toil and to toil until age rendered him unfit for the service : and a grateful country would place him in the stocks or confine him in a gaol for a violation of the Vagrant Act. Such *was* the sailor's life, and such were his prospects. A better spirit has been infused ; and now they are more reasonable beings, and more tractable men.

It is not always calm in the Chops of the Channel. A gale comes on as suddenly as a cloud seems to form. The Thames was within forty miles of the Lizard Light, and at ten o'clock all hands seemed asleep but the look-out men. By midnight a pretty strong breeze had got up ; the officer of the first watch was too lazy to reef at the first indication of the coming gale, but he waited until twelve o'clock, when he would have the assistance of the watch below, and have some employment to

pass away the half-hour, which he generally found the longest in his watch, between the expiration of his proper time and his relief.

The wind began to whistle loudly from the westward, and the Thames stood up Channel with a slapping breeze, intending to pass within sight of the Lizard Light, and to be well up to the Eddystone before noon. The ship was made snug aloft, at least so as to run free with all security ; but after running about two hours, the weather became so thick and squally that prudence dictated another course, which was to heave to, and, as a great example did before them, “ wish for day.”

When the ship came to the wind it was requisite to close reef, to get the top-gallant-yards on deck, and strike the masts. The wind increased in loud, sudden squalls, and before daylight the Thames was under her close-reefed main topsail, fore and main staysails. The fog thickened, and, by way of a little souvenir of the climate, a considerable fall of snow came on. Daylight came, but it might just as well have kept away. The snow fell so thickly that it was impossible to see a mile in any direction ; and as in those times chronometers were not brought to their present perfection, and navigation by no means so generally understood, the situation of the frigate became a little unpleasant. But no pen can convey an idea of the annoyance a

seaman experiences, when he has a fair wind close to his harbour, and dare not avail himself of it.

In spite of the snow, a vigilant look-out was kept; and all that day the fog remained, as the sailors remarked, thick enough to be eaten with a spoon. Bowling began to feel very uneasy, for he fancied the motion of the ship was not as regular as it had been; and that every now and then she made a kind of double lurch, as if the sea had rebounded from the shore, to which he believed himself near. They had made no land for thousands of miles; and the soundings alone were now their guide.

It is certainly true that so well has that high road of commercial intercourse, the English Channel, been surveyed and sounded, that there is not apparently one foot which has not been visited by the lead-line. The variation of the colour of the sand—the mixture of small shells—the deviation into mud—a harder and more consistent soil, mark the approach to the coast, or a further ingress to the Channel. The master was confident; and yet in his confidence was very prone to look over the charts and measure distances. Here and there he saw sand and fine shells, with a corresponding depth of water; but this sand and fine shells extended some distance to sea, and yet came close to the land. The latitude convinced him

pretty well of his situation, and yet he was evidently ill at ease.

There seemed a rather general disposition on board to consider themselves much nearer Mounts Bay than their wished-for haven at Spithead ; and the only man who did not seem to care one straw for any danger and difficulty was the man who knew less about the concern than his messmates—the doctor. It was all the same to him as long as there was a little danger ; a calm in life he abhorred ; and everything coming exactly as it was anticipated, was rather a bore than otherwise.

The wind before daylight suddenly shifted, and blew home to the English shore. The fog began to clear away, and the morning broke, shewing to Bowling and the master that they had committed a great error in believing that they could escape at discretion, even if they found themselves within half a mile of the land. The sudden shifting of the wind made Mounts Bay a lee shore ; and they found the frigate drifting right in, with a cross-sea running high, the wind extremely boisterous, and the situation very dangerous.

It was now the time for the good seaman to shew himself. And when the Thames was placed under her reefed courses and close-reefed topsails, with a try-sail and fore stay-sail, it became evident, in spite of all the seamanship in the world,

that the ship could not weather either point of the bay sufficiently far to clear the other land. There was now no time to be lost,—a shipwreck stared them in the face; for a small merchant brig was seen a little on their lee quarter, vainly endeavouring to strive against her fate by means of her canvas.

The cables had been bent the day previous; and now every anchor was got ready. There was a companion in danger; the poor brig had not the power of the frigate, and she soon fell to leeward; still however struggling against her inevitable fate, and clinging to the last chance as firmly as Green clung to the doctor's unfortunate head.

Although not the slightest inattention was committed on board the Thames, yet officers and men both seemed to regard the fate of the brig more than the dangers which surrounded them; whilst it was more than probable that the brig would be, if wrecked, in a better position than the frigate, for which vessel, if the wind continued, only one chance existed, and that was in her anchors. The brig would be wrecked by daylight—then assistance is ever at hand; and there are willing hands and brave hearts to come to the rescue; but in the darkness of night, when the cold wind blows, and rain falls in torrents, or the biting frost checks the warmest feeling, then some, not induced by plun-

der, or the chance of gain, which ever attends a wreck by daylight, creep to their beds and sleep in security, whilst the hapless seaman is struggling in the jaws of death, and vainly crying for assistance. There is many a man who would run any risk in fair weather, who is checked by a cold wind and a piercing sleet.

The brig had to go through all the manœuvres which the frigate contemplated. She drifted further and further to leeward, whilst the Thames, having vainly attempted to tack, had wore short round, and had more time to look the danger in the face. All hope was gone. The brig drifted into the bay; the sea pitched her about like a plaything; and the spray flew over her broad bow as it effectually stopped her way. She was now about to try her last resource; and Bowling took this opportunity of directing his crew's attention to the scene before them.

"Everything," he said, "must be no sooner ordered than done; the sails must be handed quicker than if an admiral and a whole fleet were spectators of a frigate coming into harbour. The anchors must be let go the instant the word is given; and we must be careful not to let the apparent danger force us into confusion; courage, coolness, and activity, may save us from that fate."

It was now about four in the afternoon; and

with the same eyes that a man on a platform sees his friend executed, and knows he is to follow, did the crew of the Thames watch the last struggle of the brig. She clewed up her sails with some degree of despatch ; but she had only men enough to attempt to furl one at a time ; her anchors were let go. Those emblems of hope, which seemed now thrown for ever from the vessel, performed their required services, and the vessel came head to wind ; but it was but for a moment. The maintopsail was yet unfurled ; the breeze freshened in a squall ; and those on board the frigate who watched the brig with all the fear of men who see their own fate pictured before them, observed her drag her anchors, fall broadside to the wind, and drift away towards the shore, over which the breakers threw their white spray.

“ She’s ashore ! she’s gone ! ” was heard from many of the anxious spectators, while fear caught the sound and repeated the cry in accents of despair.

It was a moment of intense anxiety ; but the worst was soon over. It was evident that the brig must have parted her cables, for the fore stay-sail was run up, and the vessel, bow on to the shore, was steered to her destruction.—(It is always better to go end on, than broadside on, the vessel will hold together longer ; and if the beach is steep too, the

crew may be saved from the boatsprit end.) The last flickering of hope was extinguished ; every man, regardless of his own danger, fixed his eye upon the devoted vessel ; she seemed rising upon a higher sea ; and her stern was scarcely above the breaking wave which foamed and roared as it bore her onwards to the rocks. At last she struck ; the mainmast fell at the first shock ; and this announcement that the work of death and destruction had begun, was acknowledged by one general burst of uncontrolled feeling on board the frigate. Sea after sea now tumbled upon her. The foremast fell in about five minutes after she struck ; and she was now a certain wreck, breaking up more and more as the heavy seas rolled in.

It was not every man who could look with unblanched cheek at this scene ; and yet it appeared to make no impression upon Bowling, save that of pity for the sufferers.

“ Nice work for the wreckers,” said the doctor, with provoking coolness, “ and very unsatisfactory, I should say, for the underwriters ; as for the owners, they gain of course. Such a bluff-bowed monster must be insured to the full amount.”

The purser, a careful man, and one who had the unenviable reputation of being able to make dead men chew tobacco, got his books together and tied them under his coat. He never threw a chance

away, and was well aware how profitable the wreck of the frigate would be to him if plenty were drowned ; but being a very considerable rogue, he had some qualms of conscience. So, having shut himself up in his cabin, and having insured as much as he could his worldly interest, he now betook himself to his prayers, and endeavoured to recollect some which, having been long disused, had almost faded from his memory.

The master, a stern old weather-beaten tar, had, during his life of danger, experienced many a hair-breadth escape in the battle and the breeze, and therefore could not believe his time come, although a fearful example was before his eyes.

The first-lieutenant was busily employed in enforcing order, whilst the rest of the officers, being occupied in seeing some work done, were kept with their minds engaged so actively, that they had no time to be frightened.

“ Well, master,” said Bowling, as he took the former to the taffrail, “ this is a nice business—what do you think of the result ?”

“ Trust in God, and the Spanish cable, sir ; we shall get through it yet.”

“ How is the holding ground here ?”

“ Not very famous for that, sir ; but vessels have ridden out gales without being lost.”

“ What, blowing as hard as it is now ?”

“Hard enough, sir, to blow the boatswain over the taffrail.”

“We cannot keep off all night—we shall drift down to where the brig anchored about eight o'clock!”

“More’s the pity, sir, but what can’t be cured must be endured; we shan’t be wrecked I know from any accident on board the vessel. I’ve stoppers enough to hold the Jamaica mountains, which disappeared one night. Keep her full, boy!—don’t touch her. I think we might pick out a smooth place and stay here, sir—ready about, sir—”

“Hands about ship—look out now, master! Keep her rap full, quarter-master. Now then, ease the helm gently down;—‘Helms a-lee!’—check the lee fore-brace a very little—that’s it; she’ll come round. ‘Main-sail haul’—which way does she go?”

“Falling off—all right, sir!”

“Haul, all!”

CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH THE READER IS INFORMED OF THE AUTHOR'S IDEA
OF AN "UNCOMFORTABLE SITUATION."

"THAT'S pleasure deferred," said the doctor, as the Thames once more stood across on the larboard tack. "It's like a man dying of consumption, and eating soups and jellies. We must face it at last, and therefore the sooner the better."

"Not exactly so," replied Bowling. "Not that I venture to dispute your medical position; but as we got into this uncomfortable situation from a change of wind, so we may get out of it again the same way. We have no tubercles on our livers, doctor; we have not begun to dry cough and spit blood. We have hope enough to cheer us, although

that brig does look like a horrid beacon, shewing us the best place on which to run the ship."

"Hope!" cried the doctor. "I have enough of that left to make a midshipman an admiral. No occasion to whistle for a wind now, sir!"

As the doctor made this remark a squall, of which there had been a hundred before, came on more violently than any of its predecessors. The main-tack gave way, and away flew the mainsail to leeward. Quick as the men were to the clue-garnet, it was too late; the first flap of the sail split it, and it blew literally to ribbons. The ship righted as this powerful sail was taken off her; her way decreased; she fell to leeward; and now there was nothing left for it but to anchor.

"Turn the hands up; furl sails," cried the captain; and he gave his orders, as he calculated they had at least half an hour's drift to furl everything. "Send down the top-gallant-mast on deck; and strike the lower-yards and topmasts."

"If she does not ride easily, master, to her anchors, I would not hesitate one second, but cut away her lower masts, and let the hull ride it out."

"We could do that better now, and let them fall to leeward. Once at anchor!—and that last resource is a dangerous one."

The beautiful discipline of the Thames might now have been seen to admiration. The orders were

promptly executed in spite of her rolling about, and by the time she had got into nine fathoms water she was in perfect readiness to meet the gale at anchor. The small-bower was let go first, and when the cable was checked she rode for a second head to wind. Then the best-bower and sheet-anchors were let go, and the cables veered away until nearly at the clinch. Several times she was checked during this manœuvre; and when she was finally stoppered she came to her proper position without a jerk, and rode as easily as a vessel could in such a tremendous sea.

Sad indeed was the prospect as the sun went down, red and fiery, and the dark, angry clouds settled on the horizon to windward. The cheerless night began to set in; the wind increased, the Thames pitching heavily at her anchors; one by one the lights of the town, as the inhabitants betook themselves to their comfortable bed, disappeared; and the high hill was scarcely visible in the gloom of the darkness. Far different were the anxious moments on board of the frigate. Men were in each main-chains with lead-lines in their hands, to ascertain if the ship drifted the least; and at every sea which came towering onwards, and sweeping the vessel from stem to stern, the same question was asked, "Does she hold on?" Death seemed riding on every wave; on every blast came the demon of

destruction. Fear had usurped the place of courage in many; scarcely an eye was closed; and the moon, as it appeared to fly through the clouds, only gave the wearied seamen a sight of the surf, which seemed roaring for another victim. The loud gusts of the wind, as it hoarsely sang through the shrouds, sounded sadly on ears ever accustomed to its noise; and the rain, as it fell in thin sleet, only fed the violence of the breeze.

The seamen had now, one by one, taken all the precautions against starvation on shore, forgetting that in England the purses of the benevolent are ever wide-mouthed in the cause of distress. Some carefully put into their pockets the few coins which they possessed; some put on their best clothes; and others, as if death were less horrible in drunkenness, endeavoured to drown their minds, and leave their senseless bodies to chance.

The first-lieutenant was, however, much too quick for these cowardly curs. Sentinels were placed over the after-hold; and although each man's life would have been rashly insured at half an hour's duration, these men kept their posts with military exactness. One or two old seamen, who from their infancy had been cradled in a ship and rocked by the breeze, even now could sleep. They were men who had no ties to bind them to the shore, excepting those which, in the libertinage of

their lives, had been allowed by law. Their affections were not upon any one object, and their hope never extended beyond the present time.

Amongst the officers a very different feeling prevailed. They were all sensible of the imminent danger; and all, excepting those whose duty occupied them, wrote letters for their parents or their sisters, and prepared themselves for death as they related the probable account of their loss.

Bowling had done all this; and in his last affectionate epistle to Susan, although resigned to his fate, he could not but deplore the few minutes which made the green spot in the oasis of his heart: those few moments had been spent in her society. His friend the doctor was instructed, if he survived, what to do. And when the captain, a little shaken by the thoughts which naturally arise in an affectionate breast, volunteered to be of equal service if he survived, to see the doctor's last wishes obeyed, he was answered, that as for friends he never was troubled by any of them, that he never had credit enough to be trusted in money affairs, and that the only debt of which he was aware was that one to the Irish gentleman, which the captain might discharge, and a slight account with Green, which he hoped to be able to settle himself.

Bowling endeavoured to wean him from these subjects by assuring him of his danger; but the

doctor, as coolly as if on shore, answered, that he was quite aware that all Englishmen were only sure of two things, death and taxation; that he had looked the first so often in the face that he had grown familiar with it; and that as to the second, there was only one way of avoiding it, which was by a personal acquaintance with the former.

“To a married man,” said he, “death appears horrible—there is the wife again! but to a single one, if he has no money, the case varies materially, as I can prove. I have cut up hundreds of dead men; I have handled them as often as an undertaker; and I assure you that the apprehension of death is greater in its horrors than the reality. If it was not for some feelings I have that point to a hereafter, I would die just as soon to-night as not.”

“And yet,” said Bowling, “you must have some ties in Scotland—some early recollections—some associates of your youth, to whom you would send one message?”

“Nothing of the sort,” replied the imperturbable doctor. “I have a recollection, and not a very comfortable one, of a schoolmaster; but as for the rest—I was caught. A brig came into Leith Roads, and drifted a jolly-boat astern, full of burgoos; I jumped in, with a dozen others, for a feed; they hauled the boat alongside, and thus made a haul of doctors, now liberally spread over the navy.

I shall be happy to do anything for you if I survive, and that is unlikely; but as for myself, I have not one soul that I care about meeting, excepting always my Irish acquaintance."

At this moment the man in the starboard chains said the ship was drifting; the kedge and the stream anchors, with guns lashed some small distance from them, were let go; the whole crew were on deck in a moment; and a kind of panic prevailed, which gave the doctor a good idea as to the confusion which would inevitably follow.

Fortunately, it was a false alarm; but it kept all hands in that feverish state that the lead-line was consulted every second, and more than a quarter of an hour elapsed before the crew could be reconciled to the certainty of their safety.

"I think, sir," said the master, "we had better cut away the masts. She labours so heavily that she never can ride out the gale, if it increases."

"It cannot blow much harder than it does now," said Bowling, as he shook his wet jacket, a sea having broken upon the bows, and sent its spray as far aft as the taffrail.

"The sea may get higher, sir, and the squalls shew that it can blow harder. It is a miracle our having held on so long."

"Well, then," replied Bowling, like a man convinced against his will, "away with the main and

mizen-masts ! We must keep the fore-mast to run her on shore, if we are unfortunate enough to require its assistance."

There are few things more disheartening than cutting away the masts of a ship. The hull is of little use without their aid ; and depriving oneself of these useful and ornamental appendages is like amputating the legs and arms of a man, leaving the trunk quite dependent upon others for assistance. But imperious necessity demanded it, and away went the mizen, and then the main-mast. The foretop-mast was got on deck, and nothing left to hold any wind but the foremast, with the foreyard swayed half-mast up.

With the flood tide the wind came on stronger, and the sea ran higher. The ship evidently had dragged a little ; for the lead which was held up and down in the main-chains had now become up and down under the fore-chains. Now there was no security ; and in one of those tremendous gusts which rarely occur on the coast of England, but are common in milder climates, the best bower parted, the small bower came home, and the Thames fell off broadside to the wind.

Now came all the horrors of a shipwreck under the worst of circumstances—darkness. True, indeed, the white surf, as it broke over the beach, gave a kind of unwelcome light. It marked the

rocky shore, which stood as a limit to the sea ; and it pointed out dangers the mariner could not shun.

To say that discipline could command silence in such an awful moment would be madness. If men were silent, it was from fear. An enemy may be vanquished ; flight may shelter ; and death is not certain even in the hottest combat. But a wreck in the dark night, when the sea runs high, and the winds howl and hiss at destruction, is the forerunner to many a silent grave. There was nothing for it but to run on shore stem on, and even Bowling hesitated, as if wishing to prolong the catastrophe for a few minutes ; but knowing that the small bower might yet check her as she got into shallower water, and perhaps hinder her drifting into a nearer vicinity to the shore, he reluctantly ordered the cables to be cut ; and the Thames, falling off before the wind, was standing towards the shore. Now the death-signal was given ; the guns of the frigate were fired one after the other ; and such was the noise of the elements that the lee guns could hardly be heard to windward. The flash must be seen, if the sound was lost, in the break of the sea. Blue lights were burnt ; and the ten minutes of life were well employed in giving warning to others that the frigate had drifted, and was near her wreck.

The sea boiled higher and higher as the angry surf broke over her quarters, lifting her high above

the usual level, and then sinking her so low that each man's lips were firmly compressed, and each hand clung to a cleat or rope, as the keel was expected to make its first touch on the rocks beneath. As she rose again to the coming sea, the wind appeared to have increased a hundred times in strength; the wave came hissing onwards; the boiling spray blew over the ship; the sea broke upon her quarters; and as she descended into the valley beneath, a sudden crash announced the unwelcome intelligence—the rudder, forced from pentle and gudgeon, burst through the upper deck; the whole frame seemed disjointed. The foremast tottered and fell, and the ship stopped one moment on the threshold of destruction.

It was but a second; the loud shriek of the affrighted youngsters was unheard amidst the general ruin which accompanied the total abandonment of discipline. Some lay down on the deck and grasped, with a deadly clutch, some bolt which seemed to offer security from being washed overboard into the “hell of waters,” which foamed and hissed around them. Some had secured oars, and relied upon the numerous loose spars; some, as if eager to be saved before their companions, leaped into the quarter-boats; and the fear which impelled them to this action, blinded them to the consequences. The next sea washed away the

boats, and some five or six of the crew were left to struggle in the sea.

The ship had gone end on, and, although hard and fast astern, was still afloat forward ; therefore, as the sea came in it lifted the stern-post clear off the rocks, and she surged onwards before she was again left aground, having started, in the suddenness of the shock, all her fastenings.

It is when placed in such situations, while suggesting resources to save others and oneself, that true courage is shewn. In the noise and tumult of the battle, many men are brave, and do great actions, which raise them to high honours, who would slink away into the lowest retreat to avoid a combat with the elements. These men sink into insignificance, and are tossed upon the bosom of the sea like an infant in a giant's arms ; there, strength is almost unavailing, and the mighty power of man's mind almost useless.

The second shock shook the ship violently ; the keel was heard to grate along the rocks, and then it was imagined suddenly to have started altogether.

The doctor stood just before the stump of the mizen-mast, and by him, close to the wheel, was Bowling ; a moment's life could scarcely be reckoned upon by the most sanguine. And Bowling gave his hand to his fighting friend, and wished him good-bye.

“Good bye,” said the doctor, “until to-morrow morning; we have got plenty of work to do to-night. I shall stick by the wreck until it deserts me!”

Some of the men availed themselves of the spare spars and jumped overboard, clinging to masts and yards for their safety; others cowered on the main deck, believing themselves secure whilst the bulwarks held together. Some said their prayers, and lifted their trembling voices in supplications to God; others, whom even death in all its terrors could not scare, cursed the sea as it broke over the ship, and seemed to defy its power:—these men all advised to stay by the wreck.

In the mean time, those generous fellows on shore, who are ever active when danger is at hand, had left their warm beds and stood on the beach with lanterns ready to assist the shipwrecked crew. A small, drizzling rain added a little to their uncomfortable situation; but Englishmen never heed these trifles when they can be serviceable in danger. They held their miserable lanterns to cheer the seamen, and shew them that assistance was at hand; but it looked like mockery in such a night, and in such a gale, to hint at security, although apparently so near.

Who had landed or who had been drowned, or dashed headlong against the rocks, no one knew;

all the most timid had tried their fortunes by endeavouring to reach the shore, and not more than forty remained on board. Each sea, as it rolled along, contributed to the scene of devastation ; the upper bulwarks began to give way ; the booms and boats were swept into the sea ; the stern frame was battered to pieces ; and each succeeding wave made a clear rush along the main deck. Fatigue soon began to overcome the most resolute ; but when death is near, hard indeed is the struggle against it, and man, as Byron says, "Sinks outwearied rather than o'ercome."

Four hours had yet to pass before the welcome light of day could break to shew the resolute remaining few the dangers they had to encounter, and the assistance which awaited them. And before that long-wished-for hour arrived, not more than twenty survived on board the Thames, the rest, either worn out or discouraged, had been washed from the decks, or taken the desperate resolution of facing the foaming danger.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN WHICH TRUE FRIENDSHIP IS DELINEATED, AND A ROPE'S
END IS A DESIRABLE ACQUAINTANCE.

IT was a night seldom experienced in England ; and the oldest inhabitants of Penzance scarcely could compass in their memories a storm heavier than this. Houses were partially unroofed ; windows were shattered ; and the whole coast was strewed with wrecks. It is related, but upon rather questionable authority, that the inhabitants of the coast of Cornwall, in times happily gone by, subsisted upon the good things which fortune thus lavished upon them ; and that one Sunday, during a sermon, the pious clergyman saw his congrega-

tion visibly decreasing. At this unusual proceeding he gently remonstrated, and inquired the reason.

"Please your reverence," said a man in the church, "there is a glorious wreck close by—"

"Stop! stop! my christian brethren," exclaimed the preacher, as the whole church rose to avail themselves of the chance, "I have scarce three words to say to all who thus generously rush to yield assistance,"—the congregation paused—the clergyman divested himself of his robes and called out,—
"Let us all start fair." And away went shepherd and flock to pick up the fragments.

At daylight, the coast was discovered lined with men and women; the latter very busy in removing any light obstacles from the path of their husbands; and it was a scene of great activity.

"Now for it!" cried the doctor; "if the wind does not go down as the sun gets up, we may make up our minds to a swim."

"Not while the craft holds together," said Bowling. "As long as she lasts I am captain of her, and I will be the last man out of her."

"I wonder if Green is gone?" observed the doctor, apparently musing over his revenge. "That sea did more to break her up than all the others. We shall not have much longer to wait."

“How dreadfully high it runs,” said Bowling, fixing his eye upon the beach; “do you think we could manage to get a rope on shore?”

“We can try,” replied his companion. “There’s the deep sea lead-line in its brackets abaft; I’ll fetch it after this sea is passed. Now what can we do with it?”

“We must fasten a spar to it, and if it drifts on shore, we may yet get a stouter rope conveyed by it, and that will assist us much in our safety. We had better get forward.”

“Then we may take leave of the quarter-deck,” said the doctor, as he made a bolt forward between the seas, carrying with him the heavy reel. Bowling followed him, and just in time, for the next sea split up the planks, and left the whole of the after part of the ship to float away piecemeal. The end of the line was made fast to a loose spar, which providentially yet remained; and from the shore it was plainly distinguished as it was thrown overboard. The line was paid overboard with a free hand; and great was the anxiety of the remaining crew to witness its arrival.

The doctor was the most active of any; he got through the foremast port into the head; for this appeared to be the best place for security. Here he found one of his few friends. Green had sheltered himself against the bulwark, and had con-

trived to lash himself to some of the beackets, which had been nailed up for wet swabs. "Ah!" said the doctor, "you here?—We shall have another swim together yet, Mr. Green!"

"Now, my lads!" cried the captain, "we must get the end of a hawser up. Who is the man to volunteer for that service?"

One or two still liked the word volunteer, and went down to see what could be done; but all attempts to gain the end was impracticable; the ship was full of water, which washed over the combings of the main hatchway.

"There's still a chance," said Bowling; "the line is safe on shore; and when they find we do not bend a hawser or a stouter rope on, they will understand that we have not the means. We must make our end fast now, and leave them to act; if they bend on a rope we must try to get it on board."

"I think, sir," said old Neptune, "that if we could sling a wad-net on to the deep sea lead-line—it's stout enough for a man to be swung on it, and wash edashore, if he clears the rocks—"

"It's a first-rate invention!" observed the doctor; "and I've got a man ready for the service. Now, Master Green, are you a volunteer, or shall I press you?"

"Why, Mister—"

“ Oh, avast there, none of your misters ! it’s now every man for himself, and God for us all ; we’ve no time for titles or compliments. You and I have got an account to square off in that place, which does not look very quiet for our fight ; if you volunteer, I give up my claim upon you ; if you don’t, your cowardly carcass shall lend a hand to save mine. And I’ll take care of my hair this time.”

Green thought that no opportunity was better than this ; and he volunteered.

“ Tell them to bend a stout rope on, Green,” said the captain, “ and to haul enough of this line to them ; so that when we haul the rope on board, they will have the end of the line still on shore.”

Neptune launched his former barber ; he was swung in a wad-net, which was lashed to the line by two iron grummets. To clap these on the line, they had to cut it ; but it was securely knotted afterwards.

There is always a fortune that protects the drunkard and the coward. Green was essentially the latter ; and no one could have clung to his swinging bed with firmer hold. He worked his way easily by hauling himself along, not a little assisted by the heavy seas which threatened to swamp him. And as they came, he doubled himself up as well as he could, and clung to the wad-

net; then, as the greedy wave receded from the beach on which it had been repulsed in its approach, Green clung to the line and maintained his ground. He landed safe; and jumping out, never delivered his message, but staggered away, supported by one or two good Christians who took him to the nearest house.

In this scene of exertion there was none so active or so eager as an elderly-looking man, who, it was evident, had long been accustomed to the sea; but it never occurred to him to do what was requisite, although he had no objection to do what was dangerous. He threw off his clothes, and availed himself of the net which had proved so useful to Green; and he faced the foaming seas, using the lead-line as his holdfast. The people on shore endeavoured to dissuade him; but he laughed at their fears as he said, "When I took Martinique I had to swim against a shower of shot; what's a little salt water to that?" And old Watson, summoning back all the vigour of youth, screamed as he said, "Bowling and I swam together then, and so we will now!"

Very few who have not seen what desperate men can achieve would believe such an act as this possible; but the first Lord Exmouth did just as great an act when he succeeded in reaching the Dutton East Indiaman. His descendants wear as a crest

the resemblance of a vessel shipwrecked, which was granted from that circumstance.

Bravely did old Watson dare the heavy seas. He clung like a cat when the coming wave dashed with all its fury upon him ; and then, panting and blowing from half-suffocation, he hauled himself along. The doctor was the first who perceived him coming ; and although one man more on board the wreck would rather embarrass than assist the survivors, yet was it a grateful sight to see that assistance could be rendered from the shore without the absolute certainty of death.

“I suppose,” said the doctor (who, if ever he had known fear since the vessel struck, had quite outgrown it from his long security), “they have no rope in Cornwall, or that they have made Green a hero, and in the intoxication of his grandeur he has forgotten the message.”

“Perhaps, poor fellow,” said Bowling, “he was taken away faint and exhausted, and unable to speak.”

“He was much given to middle-watch fits and faintings, sir,” replied his friend, “but the water always cured him. This is a gallant fellow, who has ventured his life for ours. We must lend him a hand over the head-rails, for he seems pretty nearly done.”

“Tip us your flipper,” cried Watson to the doc-

tor; "that's the time of day! There's no occasion to embalm me if I die; I have swallowed enough salt to make a red herring of myself. Thank you, —where's Bowling?"

"There," said the doctor, surveying the rough-looking creature before him.

"Here we are, my old commander," said Watson, "in another business of danger!"

"Watson, my hero!" said Bowling, "this is kind of you, to risk your life for your old acquaintance."

"I think you saved mine at Martinique; so we are quits. A pretty kettle of fish you've made of this! What's to be done now?"

"The man we sent on shore was ordered to direct some one to bend on a stouter rope to the lead-line, so that we could all get on shore in safety in the manner this man was sent."

"The crowd caught him up, and, declaring him the greatest man that ever lived, have made him long before this as drunk as any lord. If he had swam with us at Martinique—oh! I forgot I saw your wife the other day, rather high and mighty; but then, poor thing! she knows no more of friendship than a Jamaica nigger does of snow."

Bowling was inclined to get into conversation about his Susan, when a tremendous sea fairly ripped up the decks, leaving only the forecastle

entire. Even Watson looked a little astonished, and, giving a kind of whew ! remarked, " The sooner we are out of this the better. Hand up the end of a rope, and I'll take it on shore."

" The store-room is swamped, and the cable-tier, as you may see, inaccessible."

" That's a long word for such a strong breeze. Here goes ! Look out for my hat being thrown aloft, and haul away !"

" Mind you have enough of the lead-line to make a hauling-line of on shore."

" I understand ; here goes, I say ! This is not so bad as Martinique, when I—"

The doctor stopped the yarn which even then old Watson would have spun, and away went this water-dog over the bows, and was soon covered by the following sea. No man was more active than Watson. Although nearly dead from the immersions, he gave directions for the rope, and bent it on himself. He then desired one of the men, for he was too weak himself, to throw up a hat, and a moment afterwards they saw the stout rope crawling into the water.

No sooner was everything made fast on board than the rope on shore was carried so high up the beach that it was nearly clear of the water altogether. Now came a little trial of that generous feeling which is oftentimes seen amongst men accus-

tomed to hair-breadth escapes. None would go first.

“Richardson,” said Bowling, “I am captain of this ship and of her crew until a court-martial is held upon me for her loss. I order you to go.”

Richardson said, “I’m forced to obey orders any how, but I should like to have the honour of swinging your honour.”

“Thank you, my lad ! I feel what you say, and know what you mean ; I must be the last man. Go !”

Richardson went on shore like a lord. He got a little ducking, but landed safe. They wanted to take him to a house ; but he called them all land-lubbers, and swore he would never leave the rope until his captain was safe. However, he had no objection to drink their healths in a glass of rum, as he had taken plenty of water on his journey on shore to make salt grog of it. The net was soon hauled on board again, and ten men were safely landed. Not one of these would leave the rope until all should be on shore ; and having ascertained Green’s delinquency, they vowed they would cob him most heartily when they got alongside of him. “I wonder,” said Neptune, “what’s the go now, that they don’t make the signal on board.”

“Why, it’s the fighting doctor and the captain a quarrelling about who shall be last. Some of our

chaps wanted to know who was to be first, but I'm blessed if those two won't come together."

"I insist upon it, doctor, that you go first."

"I really cannot take precedence of a married man."

"You see how this sea is breaking up the vessel. The very planks on which we stand are started; and if the head-rails give way, or the forecastle breaks up, we are lost."

"I am very sorry for the consequences; but it's my duty to attend the sick on board, and I'll go below, and dive for the cockpit, and fetch up a corpse, rather than go first. I tell you the plain matter of fact, Captain Bowling; you may try me at a court-martial if you like, but if I go I'll be—"

"Don't swear now, doctor. Look astern, and see what's coming up. We have no time to lose; let's go together."

"You get into the net, and I'll swing on below."

The captain got in, and the doctor waved his hat, and away went the sling, leaving the doctor monarch of all he surveyed. He gave the captain a cheer, who, believing the event to be accidental, looked back with a look of envy at his old faithful companion.

The doctor hauled the sling back for himself, and got in it. He gave the signal, and he felt him-

self moving along the rope. At this moment the squall behind came up ; it lashed up a more furious sea than ever ; and a higher one striking the wreck, heeled her over to port. The rope had been made fast to the starboard bow ; and this fresh strain, brought upon it by the sudden heeling over, snapped it, and the doctor fell into the water enclosed in the net. Bowling saw the accident, and comprehended the imminent danger of his friend. "Haul away for your lives !" he shouted. "He must be drowned without we can haul him right on shore !" And away the last ten men scampered with the rope, lugging the doctor by force along the bottom until they landed him like a netted shark.

Bowling was the first by his side. The method adopted to save his life had nearly caused his death, and he was carried, speechless and bleeding, to the nearest medical aid.

Out of the crew of three hundred men, not more than sixty survived the wreck. Those who, imagining the first danger the least, had precipitated themselves overboard, were all lost. Their bodies strewed the beach ; and for days afterwards bodies, bruised and mangled, were thrown on shore. Some, more fortunate than the rest, had been carried on a high sea, and dashed upon the beach. Then they dug their nails into the shingle, and endeavoured to

hold themselves back from being forced into the sea, which, having again received them, turned them over on the next wave, and threw them even beyond the mark which forced, in its reflux, the round shingle into the sea.

Throughout the night men had been down to the limit of the shore, watching to render assistance ; and many a body, thrown like a weed upon the beach, had been carried to the surgeon. But no one who has not witnessed the scene can imagine the desolation that reigns after a wreck. The shore seems covered with broken spars, and boats rendered useless by the injury they have received. Here and there a cask may be seen ; old pieces of rope, small canvas, yards, masts—everything which contributes to the equipage of a ship—lie strewed along ; whilst here and there the unsightly view of a corpse, swollen and bloated from the worst of all deaths, is thrown upon the beach, an awful warning of the terror and danger of a seaman's life.

Although Bowling was requested by the principal inhabitants of the town to dwell with them, and some even quarrelled for the honour of hospitality, yet Bowling would only live with his old friend in danger, Watson ; and on this occasion, although Mrs. Watson could not forget the injury Susan had

done her in past times, she behaved like a good Samaritan to Bowling.

Before the official despatch, announcing the loss of the Thames, was begun, a note was despatched to Susan.

It began and ended thus:—"You will hear of the loss of my frigate. This will convince you I am safe."

It was with feelings of the deepest regret that Bowling and the doctor attended the burial of their former shipmates. Amongst these was the master, and two of the lieutenants. The former had been washed overboard whilst endeavouring to burn a blue light after the ship had struck. The remainder of the crew were mustered, and were kept in constant employment in endeavouring to save every store and every spar which was washed on shore. The official letter was written, in which every word of truth was inserted—the exact position of the ship, the calm, the treacherous calm before the fog, the gale, its sudden shift, and the termination of the event. By return of post an order came for the remainder of the officers and men to embark on board a brig sent from Plymouth for that purpose, and an intimation was given that at that port the court-martial would take place.

"Watson," said Bowling, "we have had one or

two narrow squeaks for this life; take this watch, and when you look at it remember that no time can obliterate my friendship, or the acknowledgment of the obligation under which you have placed me."

"That's all gammon," replied Mrs. Watson; "but I like you, although you are the husband of Susan Monckton."

CHAPTER XVII.

IN WHICH THERE IS NAVAL JUSTICE AND SHORE-GOING
HOSPITALITY.

BOWLING had written to Susan concerning the pending court-martial, and, anxious as he was to see her, he begged she would not come to him until after the court-martial had assembled. He said that on this unfortunate occasion no blame could by possibility be attached to him had the master survived ; but that now the malicious and the envious might detract from his character, and finish all their arguments thus : “ All I know is, that Captain Bowling commanded the Thames, and that he lost her.” And when Susan, in her warm, affectionate letter, greeted his return in the

warmest language, she forbore to mention Harrison's discovery, being willing to give her husband a double surprise; first in her own appearance, and secondly, in a father's embrace.

Harrison was eager to write to his long-lost son, but Susan begged of him to desist: "He will be here as soon as your letter could reach, and the surprise will compensate him for the loss of his ship."

"It is a hard thing, Susan," said old Harrison, "for a father who has found a son to wait a moment. I have always some dreary forebodings that I shall never see him. Hope deferred has, in reality, made my heart sick. Who knows but the brig in which he is to embark may be wrecked, or fifty thousand accidents to which the perilous life of a sailor is subject may occur?"

"Why, I vow you almost frighten me; and had I not known that hope, although deferred, may ultimately be realized, as in my own case, I should begin to swoon with apprehension; but that would be unworthy of Bowling's wife, and I will not believe it possible that such events could occur."

"Well, well, my dear, I did not wish to frighten you, but wise men do gather experience from the past, and by long-gone events judge of futurity; he has been wrecked once."

"And therefore the chance is less that it may

occur again. I've heard Bowling mention that an Irishman, one Paddy O'Leary, in a hot action with an enemy, put his head in a hole made by a shot, calculating that the chances were at least a million to one that no other shot passed through the same hole."

"Well, my darling, if comfort is to be had for the fretful and the apprehensive, my sweet Susan, you would give them it; how long are we to wait before we see him."

"The martial law does not linger like the civil; perhaps by this time he is at Plymouth, and tomorrow he may be tried; perhaps time will be given him, and then a week may elapse."

"A week," said Harrison, "I could as soon look forward to a year. I must go to my wife; good bye."

A week was suffered to elapse before the court assembled, and Bowling stood before his judges to answer the charge of having lost his Majesty's ship *Thames*, then under his command.

It was impossible for any man to have looked at Captain Bowling without admiration; he was, as the song says, "of the manliest beauty," and his large eye, quick and clear, seemed to pass every object in review before him. His brother officers knew his value well, and although he had very little acquaintance with them personally, yet his

name was familiar in every midshipman's berth ; and when dashing deeds were mentioned, the capture of Martinique and of the frigate were sure to be mentioned, and the hero's name became public property.

The circumstances of the loss of the Thames were gleaned principally from one of the lieutenants : he swore that in his watch every possible precaution had been taken ; that for hours the master had remained on deck, watching for a glimpse of the sun ; that every half-hour they sounded ; and that during the fog not a quarter of an hour elapsed without this precaution being taken. He swore to the unremitted attention of the captain ; that he was hardly ever absent from the deck ; that the cables were bent, and that all instructions in the book had been rigidly complied with. The court then elicited the sudden change of wind, the constant exertion made to overcome the misfortune—the wreck of the brig, and finally, the wreck of the Thames. It was evident it arose from no neglect ; but as a matter of justice more than necessity, Captain Bowling was called upon for his defence ; but previous to entering into that, the court retired for a quarter of an hour, the time asked for by the prisoner.

Bowling had remarked a fine-looking elderly man observing him closely ; and from the interest

expressed in his looks his anxiety appeared greater for the prisoner than the prisoner felt for himself. When the time was allowed for the preparation of the defence, this stranger asked Bowling if he could assist him. There was something which seemed to attach both parties to each other, and when Bowling thanked him for his kind offer, he added, "I have seen the manner in which you participate in my feelings, and I cannot but be grateful for such attention to my interests."

"I feel indeed for your interest," replied the stranger, "and I wish I could urge you to turn your attention to your defence."

"It is done—it is here," said Bowling, "I wrote it yesterday; it is no unusual thing," he continued, smiling, "for court-martial defences to be written a month before the trial. We have no legal quibbles, and the prisoner knows every word which will be uttered against him. The court are assembled, I shall not detain them long."

"Allow me to be near you," said the stranger.

Bowling bowed an assent, and he read his defence in a clear, manly voice. The doctor stood close to him, evidently little engaged in the matter; his eyes were rivetted on a short, curious little man, who was a spectator, and who seemed to give his undivided attention to the minutes. It was soon over; the court was cleared; again the public

were admitted ; the full and honourable acquittal which of course followed excited little attention. At the close, the president, in the handsomest manner, returned the captain's sword, remarking, that he was proud of his situation as president, since it gave him the opportunity of returning to one, who had so gallantly used it in the defence of his country, that sword which he prayed he might long live to use to the honour of the service, of which he was an ornament, and to the advancement of his already justly-earned reputation. This seemed too much for the old gentleman, he took Bowling's hand, and held it firmly in his grasp.

"It is the happiest moment of my life," he said ; whilst the doctor whispered, "Who's your energetic friend ?"

The president, before he dissolved the court, called "William Green." The doctor immediately bustled up. "Green," said the president, "the court have heard with considerable pleasure your daring conduct in this affair ; and they attribute the safety of the remaining crew and officers to your intrepid courage in risking your life in the net, solely to relieve your shipmates. The court have recommended you to the Admiralty as a man who should be rewarded by a warrant ; and I take this opportunity of mentioning that when you

are reported qualified for the situation of gunner, you will receive the appointment. This court is dissolved."

The doctor could not contain his laughter ; he put his hands over his mouth to avoid the sound, and rushed unceremoniously out of the cabin. For now he had found out, that although a man may be an errant coward, he may gull the whole world with his bravery. Green had been taken to the house of the editor of an insignificant paper ; but as it contained the best account of the disastrous wreck and loss of lives which occurred in Mounts Bay, it was copied into one of the London journals, and soon went the round of the press. In this account, there was a thrilling paragraph devoted to Green, who was pictured "as the bravest of the brave ; holding on with almost matchless strength to the slender lead-line—threatened every moment with destruction by the breaking seas, which thoroughly immersed him — and yet animated only by the holy cause in which he had ventured in this dangerous enterprise, clinging to the rope until he reached the shore, and then urging others to emulate himself in danger, to rescue his beloved commander, and his firmly-attached comrades." Public opinion was in his favour ; and he was not the first, nor will he be the last scamp who will

make a reputation by a handsome puff in the papers. Green walked out of court, blushing with his honours.

"Now, doctor," said Bowling, "I'm off to Exeter."

"Indeed you are not, sir! You have another duty to perform, and perform it you must;—we have had a few dangers together, now we must have one parting hour—one dinner."

"Oh, dinner, doctor! think of the impatience of Susan."

"Think of the duty we owe to you, and of the necessity of your accepting our invitation."

"Will you allow me, sir," said the stranger, "to reconcile both parties, I hope, to the proposition? I am going to-night to Exeter myself; my carriage is at the Fountain. If you, and all the officers, will allow me to solicit the honour of your company at dinner, directly after the last toast is drunk I will set off, pleased with having for my companion one whose reputation is so high as Captain Bowling's, and grateful beyond description of having made acquaintance with so gallant a company."

"You are a regular trump, old gentleman!" replied the doctor; "and we will all dine with you!"

"I must start directly," observed Bowling.

"It is useless," replied the stranger; "you will not arrive until four in the morning. Wait until nine o'clock, and you may drive up to Mrs. Talbot's to breakfast."

Bowling looked at the stranger with a look of surprise. "How, sir, may I ask you, do you know my destination?"

"I know more of you than I am allowed to say; and when you know as much of me, you will bless the day which brought us together as friends, and which will leave us more than common acquaintances. Now, sir," continued the gentleman, turning to the doctor, "as you proposed the dinner, you shall order it. I shall judge of your estimation of your captain's character by the mode in which you treat him. Remember that there is no limit to the expense."

"I would rather you ordered it," said the doctor. "I hate sporting upon other men's manors."

"We will go together; take my arm, Captain Bowling, I shall shortly rely upon yours."

On entering the inn, the stranger whispered to the landlord.

"At what o'clock, sir?"

"At six; mind, you understand me."

"For how many, sir?"

"Ten."

“Hulloa ! Captain Bowling, here’s a salute you never expected !”

Bowling looked round, and he saw his surviving crew, walking two and two, headed by old Neptune, who was spokesman. Bowling stood at the door-steps to receive the last farewell. All hands took off their hats, and smoothed down their hair, as Neptune began, “Please your honour, we are come to shew our colours at parting, and wish that every breeze which fills the canvas of your life may be a fair wind. Here we are, sir, all—every one, but Green; and he’s got too much liquor in his hold to carry sail in safety. And we hope you’ll excuse the liberty we take in saying, that if the Admiralty know what’s best for the country, and give you another ship, that you will allow us to enter on board of her; for we will stick to you to the last—do our duties as we hope we have done; and if ever we get athwart hawse of a Frenchman, Captain Bowling need not nail his colours to the mast, for there will not be one man on board who would haul them down—not even if he was ordered; and that order will never be given by our own gallant captain.”

Here the crew gave three cheers, and the old gentleman, with tears running down his face, ordered the landlord to get dinner for sixty, instead of for ten, and all in one room.

Bowling was about to make a speech, when the old gentleman bustled by, and desired to be heard. Neptune called out for the stranger to take off his hat when he spoke to the captain; others shouted, "None of your yarns, old boy; don't shove in your oar," and other sentences equally polite and comprehensive. Bowling restored silence, and the old gentleman proceeded.

"I will speak, I say. I am an older man than any of you, and have got a son a captain in the navy. You are a fine set of fellows, and I'll make all your hearts glad. You shall dine with your captain to-day, every one of you. I've ordered dinner for sixty, and when you have drunk his health in a bumper of punch, then you shall hear what he's got to say. Now away with you until six o'clock, and we'll have a jollification such as I have not had for five-and-twenty years!"

"What a regular good un!" said one fellow.

"What an illigant boatswain he'd make!" observed an Irishman.

"That's the purser's steward for my mess!" added a third.

"Hurrah for the old gentleman with the bald-head and white tie!" cried another. And after three cheers the crew departed for a little preparatory excitement in the way of a hop and a glass.

"It's very odd, doctor," said Bowling, "but I

never felt towards any one as I do to that old gentleman."

"Nor I," replied the doctor, "for I never before fell in with one who asked a ship's company to dinner. It will be the finest scene ever witnessed, and it will give a haul upon his purse which will stretch the mouth not a little."

Every praise should be given to the crew, for although they took a refresher, and many a lawyer before going into court has greedily availed himself of the same, yet they all kept sober, and at six o'clock mustered in the ball-room, twenty-five on each side of the long table, whilst the old gentleman and the officers occupied the cross-table. It was a sight worthy of Bowling, and the tears started in his eyes as he mustered at a glance the survivors of that fine crew.

The stranger, before he began, briefly addressed the men :—

"A few days back, my lads, and you were in the jaws of death ; be grateful to that Providence who has preserved you in the hour of danger, and offer up your sincere thanks for this which is before you." He then said grace, and there was not one man who did not bow his head as the old gentleman said—Amen.

"They'll all be as drunk as owls before the cloth's off the table," observed the doctor.

"I've taken care to prevent that," replied the landlord.

"What's the gentleman's name," said the doctor, in a whisper to the landlord.

"Must not say, sir," and away went the landlord.

The doctor tried every one of the servants; they had never seen him but for two days.

"Hulloa," said the chairman, "I have got no vice."

"The armourer's there," said the doctor, "he's the best man for that," and the armourer was voted in.

It was a capital dinner—rounds of beef, hot and cold, hams, fowls, and such like solids, greeted the eyes of the seamen. They had never set down to such a feed before; and notwithstanding the restraint they felt, and which operated so as to check any remarks except what came from an Irish foretopman, they fed voraciously, and drank rum and water, previously mixed, with decided energy.

"How are you getting on at that table?" cried the president.

"Mighty conveniently, your honour, considering the heat of the action; there's Richardson run aboard of a turkey, and I'm making acquaintance with a pig."

"Nothing to find fault with, is there?"

“ Nothing, your honour, excepting that Tom Ratling says he thinks you’ve employed the doctor for purser’s steward, and he’s clapped the grog on the sick list.”

All hands joined in the laugh, and so did the doctor, who called out “ that they would find the grog strong enough before two hours were over.”

“ By the piper, if I drink this for two hours,” said Paddy, “ I’ll be swamped.” This let loose the tongues, and the grog gave a little spirit ; it was a regular between decks in a moment ; and there was nothing heard but the rattling of plates and the noise of voices.

“ I say, you sir,” said Neptune to a waiter, “ give us a fid of duff, will you ?” (a piece of pudding.)

“ I’ll ask the master of the inn if he’s got one,” said the waiter.

“ Hand here some ‘ soft tack ! ’ ” (fresh bread) cried another.

The waiters were quite puzzled.

“ Here, you land lubber ! ” shouted a third, “ fist us hold of the liquor, and don’t stand there, turning your eyes up like a duck in thunder. What’s that you’re hauling about ? Is it lob-scouse twice laid, bullock’s liver and saw-dust, or a monkey’s tail shaved against the grain ? How I should like, Ben, to take in a little of his after sail, which

hangs down over his stern like the lug sail of the captain's gig put out to dry."

"Come here," said Ben to the waiter, who was rather young in his calling, "ain't you ashamed of yourself to be dancing attendance upon any set of lubbers on shore when you might be serving your king afloat? Did you ever hear of Nelson, St. Vincent, Jervis, Collingwood, and Bowling?"

"Yes," said the waiter, assuming a little authority in his manner.

"Then I'm blest if you shan't drink their healths. Come," cried Ben, "no hauling off; I've got you by the stern, and here's the liquor; now call out loud, 'Success to the hero of the Nile!' or by the piper that played before Moses, we'll fill you up chock full, and strike you down the after hatchway into the spirit-room."

The waiter, who was very unaccustomed to such obligations, resisted manfully; but in a trice he was hauled over Ben's knees, Paddy M'Laughlin held his nose, and Mr. Rory M'Queen poured the grog down his throat in spite of his kicking and flinging.

"What's the row?" asked one.

"Only stowing the chap's hold with spirits for a six months' cruise!"

The poor fellow was almost choked; and on being released, in the first ebullition of anger,

he struck Ben, who called out, "a mutiny! a mutiny!" handed him across the table, and summary justice was done by the administration of a good cobbing; for which laudable purpose Mr. Patrick M'Laughlin, ever ready for a spree, had borrowed the shovel. The other waiters were rather alarmed at this promulgation of martial law, but not fearing a like infliction, were amused at the scene, and laughed at their companion, who, after having been most woefully clobbered, was turned adrift.

Bowling came down to insist upon his liberation; but as the poor fellow had been punished without much care, his face had been jammed in a dish of mashed potatoes, and thus increased the laugh already uncontrollable. To turn the attention of the crew from the mischief into which they were fast verging, it was resolved, at the advice of Bowling, to call upon Neptune for a song. The cloth was cleared away, fresh grog brought; and Mr. Rory M'Queen, who was now in the seventh heaven of inebriation, jumped up and said, "Mr. president, your honour—"

"Hulloa!" answered the stranger, rather surprised.

"I'll venture, your honour, to make a proposal to the captain of the inn, which he'll be

delighted to listen to. Bring pipes and backey, you spooney; did you ever hear a sailor sing without his backey?" And down sat M'Queen.

"Before you begin to smoke," said the stranger, "I propose the health of Captain Bowling, and long may he live to be an honour to the gallant profession to which he belongs."

Before another word could have been uttered, half the men leapt on the table, and set the decanters rattling, to the serious advantage of the glass-blowers.

"Here's long life to your honour!" cried one. "Hurrah!" went a squeaking boy, whose shrill voice reached above the top-chain notes of the older seamen.

"Success to you, sir!" shouted another.

"Bad luck to the foul wind which ever should take your sails aback, and a fair breeze to send you home."

"Pleasant roadstead for life, Captain Bowling; well moored and good holding-ground to you, sir."

"Calm and clear," said M'Laughlin, "with your wife, squally a little with your children, and fresh breezes and fine weather in the harbour to which you are bound. If your honour ever gets another ship, ain't it M'Laughlin's own dear self that will walk barefooted from Cork to volunteer?"

“Thank you, thank you, my lads,” said Bowling. “All I can say in return is this, that if ever the Admiralty trust me with another ship, I hope I may have every man I see now under my command. And if we have lost one frigate, why we will add two or three more to the navy list, and take them ready fitted from another nation.”

Long, loud, and noisy were the cheers that followed; and it was evident that the time had arrived, without any song, for all prudent men to retire. Bowling whispered to his host, and the host gave an order to the servant behind him. He then proposed a toast, or attempted to do so; but the row and rattle at the farther end was greater than he could surmount. A boatswain’s mate piped belay; and in a trice you might have heard a pin drop.

“My lads,” said Bowling, “we have another glass to drink before we part—”

“Success to the spaker!” said Mr. M’Queen, “we are just ready to continue that same until daylight.”

“Hurrah for the principle!” said the purser’s steward.

“We must not forget our liberal host, to whom we are all strangers, and whom, perhaps, none of us may ever meet with again. In the name of the surviving officers and crew of the shipwrecked

Thames, I propose the health of our host, with three times three!—and let every man fill his glass—”

“That’s about the only unnecessary order,” said the doctor, “I have ever heard the captain give.”

“Now, my lads, give just such a cheer as you would if you saw an enemy’s flag come down, and our own hoisted instead.”

The stranger said that this day had made him young again—had made him forget years of pain in the consummation of all his hopes. “Your captain says we may never meet again ; but I say we will never part again unknown to him, and he almost unknown to me. I hardly dare say who I am, or how I came amongst you, but I have been led to court your society because you served under *his* command ; and I beg you not to break up your festivities because I may leave you. Many years ago I heard a chorus, ‘ Drink ! boys, drink ! and drive away all sorrow.’ I have done that this night, and leave you to try the same remedy for your cares.”

“ Doctor, I must go—the carriage is ready ; and my unknown friend seems to tremble with expectation. There is something about to occur to change my life ; and I feel it as others have felt, a whisper of death.”

“My Irish friend will have a taste of that ; he was in court ; and I have arranged a field-day for to-morrow. “God bless you, sir—”

“I shall write, doctor ; you are pledged to be with me in any other ship I may command ?”

“Rely upon me, sir.”

“Now, doctor, take my place, and let me creep away unseen—no, that’s unmanly ; so I will speak aloud. — Good-bye, my lads ! — long may you all live. The doctor will keep you alive until you are all dead drunk !”

The captain and his strange friend walked out under a volley of cheers quite refreshing to anybody who happened to be just falling asleep after the fatigues of the day.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN WHICH THERE IS SOME HOSPITALITY, AND LOTS OF
AFFECTION AMONGST BLOOD RELATIONS.

THE carriage rolled rapidly along the road : but few words were uttered between the parties, and those mostly in reference to the probable finale of the evening entertainments at the Fountain. Travelling after dinner at a rapid pace is a strong inducement to sleep ; and after one or two ineffectual attempts at conversation, heralded each time by a gape, both Bowling and his companion were relieved from all the troubles and vexations of life. In fact, one was pretty hazy, from not being familiar with the conviviality in which he had just been sharing ; and the other, from having drunk his

Susan's health in one or two glasses swallowed rather quickly between the toasts. One was quickly lost in thoughts of days long past, when a deep pang was inflicted in the shape of a domestic calamity; the other saw the high sea breaking up his fine frigate, and struggling against the wave, he seemed endeavouring to reach some hold which in his present state seemed to elude his grasp.

The first two or three stages were passed unobserved. Even Ivy Bridge, the usual resort of midshipmen, and known as well by name to the navy as was Nelson's after Trafalgar, was arrived at and left without a remark; and the travellers had got nearly to Haldon Hill, when it became evident that in peace a man should be ready for war. The carriage, which had rolled rapidly along, suddenly stopped; and as the fumes of the hot port had somewhat passed away, this check opened their eyes, and they found that night travelling was not always effected in security.

"The money or your life!" said a sturdy villain, as he put his head boldly inside of the carriage, whilst another gentleman of the profession turned a lantern and discovered the two travellers.

"Who the devil are you?" said Bowling, rather startled at the abrupt demand for his worldly goods.

"That may as well remain a secret, and one you

will never divulge if you do not look sharp and hand over your money. Is that postilion quiet?"

"Quiet enough," cried a third voice. "He'll go down the hill so steadily he won't alarm the gentlemen inside."

"Come," said the man, who had withdrawn his lantern and supplied the place by a pistol, "we've no time to lose. Hand out the money, or I'll put a ball through your obstinate pate!"

"What!" cried Bowling, "strike my colours without firing a shot! become a prize without a broadside! No, if I do—" and grasping the muzzle of the pistol, he turned it away from himself, and struggled hard for its possession.

"Now Joe," said the man who held the weapon, "quick, and settle the hash!"

Bowling succeeded in wrenching the pistol from the highwayman, who left the carriage to get another from his belt, which had got entangled therein.

"Three cheers, and on board!" said Bowling, as he felt the pistol his own. He opened the door, jumped out, and threw himself upon his adversary. It was a fair trial of strength, and Bowling had his money and his life to defend; but he never thought of firing—he thought only of capturing the thief.

"There, you old huckster," said the man near Bowling's companion, "take that! and now I'll

take your money." He fired his pistol, the ball of which missed the gentleman, only passing through his coat, and going out at the hinder part of the carriage. The instant the shot was fired, Bowling, who had succeeded in throwing his adversary on the ground, and who had twisted the thief's neckerchief so tightly round that it resembled a preliminary hanging, left his man and flew to the assistance of his friend. He seized the thief unexpectedly by the collar, and, putting his knee upon his back, dragged him down with a heavy fall. He fell under the carriage; and the horses, now liberated (for the third man was coming to the rescue), advanced a little, and placed the thief under the wheel. In the mean time, the old gentleman had jumped out of the carriage, and went to the man whom Bowling had prostrated and nearly choked, seeing him about to rise or struggling for offensive operations, and made a desperate attempt to keep him down. But the thief, young and active, clasped his neckcloth, and held him as in a vice. His knuckles were almost driven into the throat, and a gasping for breath, previous to his falling, only gave the thief fresh courage.

Bowling was soon round to the scene of action. "You are a dead man if you stir," said he to the third thief. "I do not want to shed your blood ;

but only move one inch, and you will never move again."

"Help ! help !" shouted the old man, as he sank down ; " help ! my son ! my son !"

The words were like fire in Bowling's heart. He left his present adversary ; and as he saw the thief drawing out his pistol, and his friend on the verge of death, he fired, and liberated him from his intended murderer. The third man, seeing himself alone, resolved on flight ; but previous to putting his resolution into force he fired at Bowling. The ball passed through his arm, and he exclaimed, " The villain has hit me !"

The postilion was now awake from the stupor the first blow had occasioned when it stunned him ; and as the old man called out, " Help ! help ! my son is wounded !" the postilion came to the scene of action.

The highwayman was mortally wounded, and lay groaning and bleeding, but still was anxious to creep to a ditch to conceal himself. The man under the wheel was not hurt, but held by the weight of the carriage, which was on his coat, and from which he could not liberate himself.

" Put my son—my only son—in safety first !"

" Hand in the old gentleman," said Bowling ; " never mind me. I am only winged ; but he must

be seriously hurt, for his mind is gone. Now look to the fellow under the wheel behind the carriage, and we will take him with us."

"He can't stir, sir; let me bind your arm."

"Take this silk handkerchief, and bind it tightly round. That's it; now for my friend here!" The carriage was backed; and the thief, unhurt, finding himself liberated, made a vigorous struggle, and, slipping from beneath the vehicle, got out on the other side, was up and off in a moment.

"I give that fellow considerable credit for that," said Bowling, as he got in. The postilion shut up the door, and the wheels once more were in motion towards Exeter.

"You are bleeding, my child!" said the stranger.

"Nothing to signify, sir," replied Bowling.
"How are you?"

"I care not for myself; it is you, you alone, that I would save."

"Lord bless you, sir! I am ready for another action. I've repaired damages; and although a spar is wounded, the hull's all right."

From this moment the old gentleman became more and more fidgetty. He scarcely allowed a moment to pass without suggesting some more comfortable situation; and Bowling, whose mind was fixed upon Susan, complied with every request without hesitation, keeping his eyes fixed upon the town

of Exeter, which now in the first break of day became visible. No sooner arrived than a surgeon, one of those mortal carpenters who patch up the cabinet of human bones, was sent for. Bowling was not seriously hurt. He was, however, in some pain, and was recommended to go to bed ; but this he positively refused. He had but eighteen miles more to go before he reached Mrs. Talbot's, and he swore a very positive oath that go he would, and that nothing should stop him.

"Let me go forward," said the old gentleman, "and apprise Susan of the accident. She, in her state, must not be alarmed ; and in this I shall use the authority I have a right to command."

"Who and what are you," said Bowling, "who have overladen me with obligations, and who appear to know every one connected with me? Will no one tell me this gentleman's name?" he said, appealing to the waiters.

"I will save them the trouble ; my name is Harrison. And now, young gentleman, you are about as wise as you were before."

"There is something very peculiar in my feelings," observed Bowling, as he held out his unwounded fin. "I feel towards you as I never yet felt towards any man ; for I have had but few friends during my life. Susan's father was kind ; the German doctor was warm and sincere ; Susan

—dear, dear Susan—was ever the compass which guided my steps; the fighting doctor was my companion in danger, Nelson my protector, Collingwood my patron; and yet I never felt towards one of those as I feel towards you.”

There was a tear which seemed unbidden to rise, and to course down the old man’s cheek. “You shall know more before you are one day older; but at present I am under a promise to Susan, whom I only left three days ago.”

“Only three days ago!” said the excited Bowling. “Tell me, sir, how is she? Is she well?—happy at my return—anxious for my honourable acquittal—grateful for my escape from the wreck? You have been liberal of your money; now be generous of your words and your information.”

“She is all you could wish—all I could desire. Come, the horses are ready. You are resolved to go; I will not detain you, for your anxiety would do you more mischief than the journey. All I exact is, that I herald your arrival.”

No boy of seventeen was ever more in love than Bowling. He had a brilliant imagination, and a fancy for poetry; and these two dress up love more to the mind of man than half the reality. It is education that gives a zest to love; simple Cymons are incompetent to picture its delights and its endearments. Love dwindles into sensuality if poetry

withholds its aid. How differently do the eyes of the ploughman and the eyes of the poet behold the first dawn of day, or watch the golden decline of the sun! The sweet melody of the bird, as it warbles its clear note in the undisturbed air of the morning, becomes sublime music to the poet, whilst to the hind who trudges to his labour it is merely the chirrup of the lark, or the squeak of the sparrow. So it is through life in all its mazes. The uneducated feel the pang as it touches their bodily sufferings; the wise and the imaginative feel it as affecting the mind; and if the latter can heighten joys by adding imagination to the reality, so they can master pain by the resources of the intellect.

The wheels, which rapidly performed their rotatory motion, seemed hardly to move. The last horses were now trotting briskly through the village where our Boniface made his little fortune, and where Cornish had accomplished his villany. Bowling looked in vain for the sign which formerly swung in the wind, and the large tree which afforded a pleasant shade for those who dozed out existence over a pipe and a pot of beer. All was changed. Even the lawyer's house looked dismal, and scarce a person was seen in the almost deserted street. Briskly trotted the horses by the opposition inn. Bowling's head was forward, looking over the distant country; and with a shout of delight,

such as the seaman expresses in the first discovery of land after his long and tedious passage across the ocean, Bowling welcomed the appearance of Mrs. Talbot's house, as it became visible from the opening on the road-side.

It was as yet but seven o'clock ; but the inmates of the house seemed awake and up. Bowling's quick eye discovered people walking near the house ; his imagination pointed out Susan. And as he said, " There ! there she is !" he gave Mr. Harrison's hand a squeeze, which left a mark in the fourth finger of a ring he wore on the little one.

" You lovers squeeze hard," said Harrison ; " yours has made my eyes so dim that I cannot see."

" Unfortunate, indeed !" said Bowling, not paying the slightest degree of attention to Mr. Harrison. " The house is full of company ; three ladies, and I dare say half a score more bedizening themselves out like peacocks. Oh, for the dear delight of a sequestered cottage ! with only Susan to be its light and the life of—"

" Love in a cottage," said Mr. Harrison, " is mighty fine in imagination. Solitude may sometimes afford a balm to grief ; but to the young and the ardent, not even love can reconcile it beyond the narrow limit of a fortnight. There is a cottage

not far from this which has sheltered the sorrowful, and afforded consolation to the afflicted ; that cottage belongs to me. Now, if the company at Mrs. Talbot's is disagreeable to you, I will lend it you for a month ; but mind, I bargain before hand, that you neither hang Susan nor yourself to the weeping-willow, or any other tree. A hanging wood," added the old gentleman, with a smile, " is beautiful in an advertisement, but discouraging in reality."

" I have grown familiar with your kindness," replied Bowling, " and I accept the offer, if it will not put you to inconvenience."

" And you will go there to-day with Susan, if the company annoy you."

" I would willingly avoid going into the house at all, if I could get Susan to come to the gate."

" How little we know," said Harrison, laying his hand on Bowling's, " of that which is for our good in this life ! Half an hour after our arrival there, if I were to ask you to leave the house, I dare say you would send for the fighting doctor to stand your second, as you did with that miserable mountebank of folly, Cornish."

" That also known to you !—but no matter ; the mystery will soon be unravelled. Postilion, ring that cursed bell down !—The only people asleep in the establishment are those who ought to be awake !"

“Stop ! postilion, let me out ; you agreed I should herald you.”

“My good sir,” said Bowling, “what are you going to say ?”

“Say ? Why, say the truth to be sure !”

“Truth is desirable always ; but a white lie is sometimes requisite. Will you tell her, that in getting on shore from the wreck I hurt my arm ? Women always imagine that when a man is wounded, he requires half the after-guard to swab the blood up, which comes in buckets full.”

“I’ll make a compromise with my conscience,” replied the old gentleman, as he was getting out of the carriage. “No, no,” he continued, “I lost him once ; I’ll not leave him at the gate again. Go on, postilion, drive up to the door.”

The arrival of the carriage was a signal for a general rush ; and long before Mr. Harrison could get out, his wife, Mrs. Talbot, and Susan had beset the door. The old man first kissed his wife, and then was preparing to perform the same delightful ceremony to Susan, who, however, burst from him, and caught Bowling in her arms. And in that moment of rapture, so absorbed was she in the bright pleasure of his return, that she never observed the arm in the sling, or perceived the blood which, from her pressure, now broke through the bandages, and became visible.

“Susan ! Susan ! dearest Susan !” said Bowling, as he looked her wistfully in the face. “You see your shipwrecked sailor returned to you. No mother mourning for a long-lost child could feel half the pleasure at his restoration to her that I feel in this warm and tender embrace.”

“False ! false ! unutterably false !” said Mrs. Harrison, who flung herself upon him, and seemed inclined to smother him with caresses ; whilst, on the other side, Mr. Harrison’s arms encircled and partially supported Bowling as he said, “My son ! my son ! Now can I claim you, and be happy !”

In this scene, far better imagined than explained, Mrs. Talbot stood by in heart-stricken sorrow. Alas ! she had no child to whom she could fly for support in her increasing age ; for her those tender ties were severed for ever ; and in the remembrance of how much she had lost by her daughter’s death, she sank into a chair and wept profusely.

It was some time before Bowling could disentangle himself again to embrace his Susan. And then it was that she first discovered the blood. She gave a loud shriek, which startled Mrs. Talbot from her sorrow, as she pointed to the arm and said, “Blood !”

“It’s a nasty word, and sounds very badly from your dear lips,” said Bowling. “It’s a mere scratch I got in saving myself from the wreck ;

but tell me, Susan, who are these who dispute your right to me, and why do they weep and laugh alternately as they call me their son?"

"Ay," said Mr. Harrison, "you are my son—my long-lost son, restored to me at last—and your mother will know you by marks which never escape a mother's eye. We must look to that arm of yours. I gave you life and being—you have saved mine; come up stairs whilst we rebandage that, and then we will be merry over your discovery."

"That is my duty, sir," said Susan; "and no one shall tend him but his wife."

"Not even his old father!"

"Not even his old father. He is mine—I have the best right to be his nurse!"

"That wound saved my life; and you shall not outdo me either in duty or affection. I will watch over him with a parent's care; and I will not trust him even to you, for fear he should be lost to me again."

CHAPTER XIX.

IN WHICH IS SHEWN THAT THE "PITCHER MAY BE TAKEN
TO THE WELL A HUNDRED TIMES, BUT WILL BE BROKEN
AT LAST."

BOWLING'S measure of delight was full. His pride, his vanity, had always revolted against the idea of his being lowly born: he had discovered his parents, and discovered them affluent, of good birth, and proper station; and in his Susan he had found that love which the vanity of the profession prompts us to say is imagined ever to exist between the sea-bird and its mate.

Whilst the malicious declare a sailor's love emblematic of the inconstant ship, ever varying its course, from the inconstant wind in the inconstant

ocean, it would be Susan who would rescue them from the slander, and point out her Bowling as an example of a totally opposite character.

From this moment Harrison sought to prolong his life, which formerly he had disdained.

“Death shuns the wretch who fain the blow would meet!”

But now every thought of his son seemed to alarm him.

It was now May, in the year 1803, and a memorable year it was for the present personages. Mrs. Talbot, in this month, in spite of Ovid's declaration, that “the girls were good for nought who wed in May,” was to be married to the good-humoured rector; Susan was to make another—a chip of the old block—a Christian; war was to be declared with France, and all England was to be taxed!

No sooner was it evident that war was to be declared than Bowling's restless spirit was startled into extra activity from a letter he received from the Fighting Doctor:—

“Dear Sir,” it began, “thank God there is every prospect of a war. I wish I could change my scalpel for a cutlass, and my syringe for a pistol. I have been terribly inactive latterly; and ever since I sent my Irish friend on a longer cruise

than he was prepared to take, I have not had one piece of good fortune in the way of a quarrel. You are always in luck ; and that bout with the highwaymen was quite delicious. I have walked about Haldon Hill ever since, in the hope of meeting a similar circumstance ; but, as usual with unlucky men, I have never been gratified. I beg to volunteer my services to sail with you, and recommend an immediate application."

No sooner did old Harrison hear that his son's "soul was in arms, and eager for the fray," than he made friends with Susan to endeavour to dissuade him from again going to sea.

"I know him better than that," said Susan : "his heart may be mine, but his whole soul is in the service. You have come, my dear father, to the worst advocate in the world, for I would not have him idle on shore whilst the enemies of his country were on the seas for all the gold in the universe. As he has risen unaided to his present rank, now your influence must be exerted in his favour ; get him a ship ; let him be first on the sea. I will part with him for his country's sake ; and I have an equal claim with yourself to his affection, and much more require his presence."

Although Mr. Harrison was rather startled at his daughter's words, he was obliged altogether to

give way when Bowling jumped into the room, waving the doctor's letter, and giving continual cheers, because murder was about

“To bare her arm, and rampant War
Yoke the red dragons of her iron car.”

He began, “Now, Sir, for your interest—a ship, sir, a ship!—let me but have one chance to redeem what some would say I lost when the Thames was wrecked, and I will die an admiral, with as many stars as would light up the heavens.”

“Think what I should suffer,” said his father, “by your loss. You will not even take my name; and although it is true you sometimes sign yourself Thomas Bowling Harrison, yet the world only knows you as Captain Bowling, and I am denied the participation of my just share of your honours.”

“Bless you, my dear father!” said Bowling, “you may call me what you like, Jenkins, Wilkins, Tomkins, or even Green, if you will but get me a frigate, and send me to sea. I have been stolen once, lost once, wrecked once, I can but die once; in my absence, my Susan will be my representative: she will console my poor mother, and you will be happy in your son's success. One word from you, so long buried from the world, will appear like a resurrection to political life. Your elder brother's interest, which, as he is without children, must

come to you and to myself, will insure success ; and once again let me see the long pendant wave over my head, and watch the proud flag of England waving from the peak of my frigate, if I disgrace it you will be happy to hear of a worthless man's death ; if I uphold it with honour, the name of Harrison will be greater, and even your brother's title of Waltham become more attractive."

"Your mother, my dear boy ! have you no thought for your mother?"

"All that a son should have, I have. I would not wound her affections for the gratification of any idle pleasure ; but this is a laudable, a praiseworthy ambition—it is a duty I owe my country ; and although I owe my parents my first duty, my first honour, yet they could not bear their son to rot in idleness, whilst the giant arm of France will be extended against our island. Tell my mother of it kindly, and write a letter to the First Lord directly. Give me but this chance, and see if I am not worthy of your name."

Mr. Harrison could no longer resist : he saw above his son's manifestations of duty and affection the bright spark of ambition, and making a virtue of necessity, he penned the solicited letter.

Bowling was now more alive than when, like Nelson, he planted cabbages and took to gardening. An active mind is sadly circumscribed in the

country ; and those who have wandered over the world in restless despatch, are not much qualified, whilst the hot blood of youth still courses in their veins, to sit down quietly, or gaze with coolness, on the dusty road which leads to the metropolis, or hail with indifference a drove of sheep, or a wandering pedlar. Poor Morris's song, in which he designates the country as "so calm and composing from morning to night," would make a sailor cut his throat, or hang himself, in the seclusion of Devonshire.

Mrs. Talbot was married to the rector ; and Susan, her husband, and the old Harrisons, left the hospitable mansion of the 'widow married' for the dulness of the cottage, in which Mr. Harrison had passed so many years. It looked a horrid sepulchral abode ; and even Susan's sprightly song, or Bowling's yarns, failed to make it cheerful. Mr. Harrison had returned to the world, and was not inclined to be sent to Coventry by it. Even Mrs. Harrison, so resigned under the afflictions she had experienced, thought a little change might be beneficial ; and it was voted, that, to whichever port Bowling should be directed to repair to join his ship, thither they should repair also. Now their only consolation was a drive to Mrs. Talbot's, and there to gossip and to laugh over the rector's news and remarks. But on the third day after

the marriage, the bride, instead of the white dress which betokens happiness, was dressed in that dark, dingy, melancholy mourning, which civilization has chosen to represent grief.

"I fear we intrude?" said Mr. Harrison, whilst Susan, kissing her long-tried friend, implored her to impart her sorrows, and allow her to participate in them.

"I grieve," said the rector's wife, "for one who certainly never deserved a tear from a woman; but we cannot forget the innocence of childhood, even in the transgressions of the man. Cornish has fallen a victim to the just resentment of a brother. You remember the trial concerning Boniface's daughter, and the ruin that followed the vindictive malice of my son-in-law. The brother of the girl had, from steward of an Indiaman, risen to be a purser of a China ship, and by prudence amassed a considerable fortune. He returned to our village to share his wealth with his father, and to place him in a better situation. He found a desert where he sought a home.

"He was recommended to Clasp for information; and here he learnt that his father had, in his old age, been endeavouring to stem the tide of misfortune which set against him when his daughter was ruined. The new inn was a failure; and at that moment Boniface was in gaol for debt,

and the sister was earning a scanty maintenance in Exeter by her needle. Clasp soon had the money to release the father, and place the girl in comparative affluence; but nothing could induce the brother to see either his father or his sister until he had been revenged upon the oppressor.

“It required but an hour to reach the house; but that was not the course pursued. The next day was market-day; and, as you know, the different gentlemen round about generally meet at the magistrate’s rooms. The purser waited, with more patience than sailors generally possess, until almost all the men of the county hereabouts were in conversation together. He asked several to point out Captain Cornish, lest he should be mistaken in his man. And, being quite assured of him, he walked up; and, from his gentlemanly appearance, was received amongst them.

“ ‘ Captain Cornish, I believe ? ’ he began.

“ ‘ The same,’ said the unsuspecting man.

“ ‘ I would place you in a position to save your life—or, at any rate, protect it.’

“The whole group turned to eye the stranger; and with that avidity for any novelty so conspicuous in Englishmen, they listened attentively to the result.

“ ‘ The brother of the girl whom you seduced and ruined is about to demand satisfaction of you ;

and, as in this case, you could not with honour fire at him whom in his sister you have so injured, I have ventured to apprize you of the fact, and to warn you that I alone can place you in a position to defend your life.'

" 'I feel very grateful,' replied Cornish, still unsuspecting, 'for your kindness; and you would place me under an obligation I should not easily forget.'

" 'I do not think you will!' said the purser, as he seized him by the collar, and, swinging him round, in spite of his strength, he chastized him with a cane until it split to pieces. 'There,' he exclaimed, as he threw Cornish from him, 'now you are on an equality with me. I am the brother of that girl who believed in you, trusted in you, and whom you ruined. The world has given you the reputation of that common animal virtue—courage. Let us see how long it will be before you have courage enough to resent those blows, which will leave a mark on your memory the longest day will never efface. I do not spit upon you—I do not kick you; but it is my regard to the usances of society which prevents this greater disgrace. Doctor?' added he, calling a sallow-faced man, 'give this *gentleman*, as the lawyers say, any facilities. I shall await you where I told you,' and he retired from the astonished group."

“That’s my doctor, for any money!” said Bowling; “he is getting ready for war, and is always looking out for a circumstance, as he calls a duel, or an execution, or an apoplectic fit, or a capsize from a carriage, or any other event which frustrates the hopes, or breaks the hearts or the necks of men.”

“What an amiable character!” observed Susan.

“But pray proceed.”

“The rest is easily told. The doctor did give every facility. He whispered cautiously, so that none could overhear, where the purser was to be found, and where he should be with him at six o’clock that evening. They met more like devils than men, Cornish swearing that one of the two must be left on the field; to which the purser remarked that the neighbouring ditch was deep enough to conceal the miserable carcass he would soon consign to it. And although the doctor declared that he should expect satisfaction himself if silence was not observed, yet such were the excited feelings of Cornish that he cursed both seconds for their slowness of preparation.

“‘Keep yourself cool and quiet,’ the doctor said to the purser. ‘You are like a bad sportsman going to fire at the first brush of the birds. Can I do anything more for you besides shooting the

second of that long-legged rascal for letting his principal talk, if you hop the twig ?'

" ' Nothing more than to see my wishes executed, as I have desired in a will left with Clasp.'

" ' I'll call out either Clasp or Pouch, or both, if you particularly desire it. I consider it my duty to attend to the last wishes of my principal. You cannot miss your man if you could hit a barn-door at twelve paces. Now then !'

" The word was given by Cornish's second, and both fired ; and both missed.

" ' You'll be popping away there until the 1st of September at that rate,' said the doctor. ' I wish I had only the settling of the dispute, and I'd bet a pound I would hit him.'

" ' And so will I,' replied the purser.

" ' Done !' said the doctor. ' It's a bet ; this shot, mind.'

" ' Oh, of course,' replied the purser. They fired again. The ball from Cornish's pistol took off a part of the rim of the purser's hat ; whilst that of the latter struck the shoulder-blade of my son-in-law, and glanced off.

" ' That's a pound, good money,' said the doctor.

" ' I must take my man from the ground,' observed Cornish's second ; ' he is wounded.'

" ' Quite impossible,' replied the doctor ; ' to

lose my money and the sport too. I expect your man, sir, to beg my principal's pardon for the injury he has inflicted upon his family.'

" 'I would see you and your principal——' "

" D—d first, of course," interrupted Bowling. Pray go on, madam; I never recollect a more interesting affair." Susan looked reproachfully at him; and as he kissed her pretty lips he said, "The remark, my love, is professional. I'll swear for the rector's wife."

"The rest is soon related. A quarrel ensued. Cornish was determined to have another shot, and his second was averse to the continuance of the duel. The doctor declared it was mighty unkind to interrupt any man in either his speech or his amusements; more especially as he had a bet of double or quits upon the event.

"They fired again, and Cornish was mortally wounded. He said scarcely a word from the time he was shot. The doctor forgot his former employment in his professional duties, and examined the wound. He saw in an instant it was mortal, and with much more feeling than could be anticipated from his former conduct he communicated the sad intelligence to Cornish; and he called upon him to do an act of justice in his last moments, to forgive the man who had shot him, and to contribute to the alleviation of the girl's misery.

“Even in death, either the vindictive malice which had been his characteristic through life, or his love of money, which never is extinguished until death comes, made him resolute to deny the doctor’s request ; and as he writhed in torture before he died, the only words he articulated were directed against Fortune for her desertion of him.”

“And where is the rector ?” asked Bowling.

“He has gone to do one of the melancholy obligations of his calling—to break the sorrowful intelligence to the father. And now I hope we may be permitted to use our endeavours to alleviate his distress ; but years have passed since we have spoken or visited. The grave of the son should be the sepulchre of our estrangement.”

“Pray, Tom,” said Mr. Harrison, “is this fighting doctor your particular friend ?”

“He is, sir ; and one I would rather have near me than any man in the navy. He is the kindest man, the best friend, and the most trustworthy mortal I ever commanded. With all his disposition to quarrel, I never yet knew him do an injustice. If he is wrong, he apologizes ; if not, he——”

“Shoots you !” interrupted Mr. Harrison.

The grief of the bride was not of long duration ; and Harrison, on his return to the cottage, found a strange gentleman waiting the arrival of his son. He was a sallow-faced, thin person, with grey eyes

deeply seated, and with a thin and rigid lip. His chin was prominent, and his cheek-bones high ; but there was an air of benevolence about him which was rather engaging.

“ My dear father,” said Bowling, “ let me introduce you to my friend and companion in arms, the fighting doctor.”

“ Lord bless me !” said Harrison, starting back.

“ And he won’t fight you, be assured. Now, doctor, the news ?”

“ War will be declared to-morrow. I was at the Admiralty two hours after the arrival of your application ; you are to have a ship, and I am once more to be with you. In the mean time, I have had a circumstance ; and our old friend Cornish, who sang your songs, is gone where poetry is not admitted since Orpheus left it. Do you know, they say your name is Harrison in London ; and as I considered that a personal insult to you, I settled the affair with an Admiralty clerk.”

“ I beg, sir,” said Mr. Harrison, “ you will call him Tom Bowling for the future, even in my presence.”

CHAPTER XX.

IN WHICH THE LIBERTY OF THE SUBJECT IS EXPLAINED, AND
GREENWICH HOSPITAL HEAVES IN SIGHT.

ON the 16th of May, 1803, war was declared with France, and all the energies of Great Britain were put forth to prepare her fleets for the coming contest. The Admiralty was besieged by officers, who had not lingered so long on shore as to become enamoured of its idleness and dissipation. The grass was soon trodden down in Portsmouth streets; and from Gosport or Common Hard to the uttermost extremity of South Sea Beach the cry was "War!" The Jews were on the alert; the dock-yard thronged with artificers; the streets displayed a hundred uniforms; and the ladies, who chiefly

resided at the back of the Point, came forth bedizened in all the gaudiness of dress. Every man's time seemed precious ; no one loitered in the streets or lounged upon the ramparts ; a general activity pervaded all sorts and conditions of men ; and Portsmouth was then a thriving place for the vigilant and industrious.

On the 18th of May Bowling hoisted his pendant, and read his commission on board of the *Arethusa*. Susan went on board to see the ceremony, and was saved the infliction of being *whipped in* by mounting the side of the hulk to which the *Arethusa* was lashed. The name of Bowling was sufficient to captivate the seamen, who have a strong predilection for names which in any way are familiar to their ears ; and before a week had transpired, what between the press-gang and the volunteers, the *Arethusa* began to shew a man-of-war-like appearance. So eager were the officers to procure seamen, and so blindly did the press-gangs perform their duties, that one night old Mr. Harrison, a man of sixty, was obliged to shew his grey hairs to save him from being hauled, nolens volens, on board the guard-ship. Fortunately, Captain Bowling came to his rescue in uniform, or Mr. Harrison might have slept on board the guard-ship. Very few questions were asked.

A gentleman in plain clothes, of about three and

twenty years of age, was caught about eleven at night, moving slowly along from Common Hard towards High-street. He was seized directly, and his voice was drowned by those of the gang, who wanted men, and not excuses. The officer who commanded this gang only heard, "Haul him on board! Freshen his way, the long-tailed varmint! Clap a stopper on his jawing-tacks, and give his red rag a holiday!" and such-like elegant extracts from the nautical literature.

"Hand him off!" said the lieutenant; "if he is not a sea-faring man, we shall find out soon who he is."

"He's a regular sailor, your honour; for he said he was 'hard up on a clinch, and no knife to cut the seizings.'"

"Very well, very well!" said the officer. "Hand him off, and look sharp about it!"

On being taken on board the guard-ship, the young gentleman asked to see the commanding officer.

"You'll see him to-morrow morning soon enough, I'll warrant! Hand him down below, and don't stand chattering here!" And as the impressed man made some show of resistance, he was forced below. Here he declared that he would have satisfaction; but finding all his noise useless, he made up his mind, like a wise man, to turn the whole affair

into ridicule and advantage, and chuckled at the astonishment he should create.

The next morning all the pressed men were ordered on deck.

"Pray, sir," said the gentleman to the first lieutenant, "am I a pressed man?"

"Yes, to be sure you are."

"And what rank am I to have?"

"Rank!" said the lieutenant, laughing—and when he laughed, all the rest tittered—"you'll be rated a landsman."

"Landsman be d—d!" said the other. "I shan't serve as a landsman."

"You had better learn to be civil, or I'll teach you the way."

"You dare not touch me until my name is on your books. I tell you I won't serve as a landsman."

"Pray what rank would you prefer?" said the first lieutenant, mimicking excessive condescension.

"An A. B., petty or warrant officer, midshipman, lieutenant, or captain? Pray choose; the service was made for you, of course."

"Well now, that's what I call civil, obliging, and proper; and makes me think you are not such monsters and bears as you are called. I'll take this rank, if you please." And he handed out a piece of parchment, and drew himself up, and

towed the line, with a face as grave as a judge; looking for all the world, in spite of his long togs, like a seaman at muster. He plastered his hair down, and looked as submissive as a marine near the gratings.

"I beg you ten thousand pardons, sir," said the first lieutenant. "I am extremely sorry for the mistake; really I do not know what to say—" But although he palavered away for five minutes, the gentleman stood with his hat off; and until he was called by his name and title—for he was a young commander just appointed to a brig—he never stirred.

"Well," said he, "as for myself I don't care; but it is just as well to let your captain and admiral know how a gentleman without a commission in his pocket might be insulted; and I think it will teach a little more prudence in future. Man a boat for me this instant!" The lieutenant blustered about for the gig, when the young commander whispered to the first lieutenant something about giving him the preference for men; and in a fortnight that brig was at sea, the best-manned vessel out of Portsmouth: and all owing to the captain having been pressed.

The *Arethusa* was at sea. Her combat with the three French frigates is familiar to the ears of all seamen, since it was recorded in one of our most

celebrated songs. Here Bowling and the fighting doctor quite outdid themselves. The coolness of the former gained him immortal credit; and when the three frigates were forced on shore and wrecked, and the *Arethusa* was dismasted, and towed off the land by the brig commanded by the young pressed commander, every man in the Channel fleet grew familiar with the name of Bowling, and he was called, in the midshipmen's berth, a star to guide others. His curious history, now generally known (for Bowling was proud of it after his birth and parentage were established), was the theme of many conversations, and was soon spread by the trumpet tongue of fame to Nelson, who was then gardening for health, whilst he was sighing to command the fleet which was blockading Cadiz.

Neither was this the only action in which Bowling was concerned; he harassed the enemy by his boats, and no vessel was safe, however close to a battery. All the officers of the navy were anxious to serve with him; he had enterprise, and he had talent; he never rashly sacrificed his men, and oftentimes commanded his own boats. The *Arethusa* was the ship for promotions, and the *Gazette* never appeared a month without a letter from Captain Bowling, detailing some events.

When Nelson, in 1805, was appointed to the command of the fleet off Cadiz, the first lord

offered him the choice of his captain: "Choose for yourself, my lord," said Nelson, "out of all the navy list; you cannot make a bad selection."

"What think you of Captain Bowling?" said the first lord.

"I think him the most rising man in the navy, and one who will leave a name in the naval history of England not often surpassed."

"I will appoint him to the Victory, being convinced that he will gain fresh laurels under Lord Nelson."

The little man bowed, and shortly afterwards Bowling resigned the *Arethusa*, amid cheers which long resounded, to serve under England's greatest admiral. On joining the fleet, Bowling hastened to pay his respects to his old commander, Collingwood, then second in command. He was received by that kind and excellent man with warm congratulations; and no one listened with more attention to his life of adventures than did Collingwood.

"You have merited," he said, "all the honours which have entwined around you; and when I think of the good fortune which first brought you under my observation, and which prompted Nelson to recommend your advancement as a spur to others, I little thought I should one day see you the flag captain of Nelson. The Victory made my signal a month

ago three times for a lieutenant. I went on board myself, and I found it was for a bag of vegetables. Now you are there we shall be saved such harassing for trifles."

A very few days afterwards the battle of Trafalgar was fought, a battle which, strange enough to say, by *some*, and those of course *ignorant* Frenchmen, believed to have been won by France. In that action Nelson fortunately died, for had he lived to have dived into the boiling water and changing currents of politics, he would not, could not, have been respected like his great rival of military fame; for great as was the name of Nelson, and hallowed as it ever will be by the navy of England, he was no rival of Collingwood in diplomacy. More ready in resources, more active in operation, quicker to discern, and more prompt to act, he wanted that coolness which characterized Collingwood.

It is true, in action he was always cool, as was witnessed at Copenhagen, when he *sealed* his letter to the Crown Prince, saying, when the candle was brought, "It does not look well to be hurried or informal at such a minute." He died, and Collingwood succeeded to the command; Bowling again was welcomed to Susan, and she saw the medal which had been struck by an act of parliament; she saw her husband "Sir Thomas Bowling,"

and smiled with affected vanity as she was called by her subservient maid "Your ladyship." Sir Thomas, in 1806, saw the hero of the Nile, of Copenhagen, and of Trafalgar, deposited in St. Paul's; and once again, eager to increase the success he had gained, he, in spite of his father's request, again solicited an appointment.

"My son," said the present Lord Waltham, for Mr. Harrison had succeeded to the title, "I cannot bear your absence; you are the prop of my house, you must not, cannot go."

"Never mind, my lord," replied Bowling. "I have left you two little props already to uphold your house. I want to uphold our name. I have chosen the sea for my profession, my country for my approvers. It is true we have not many enemies afloat, but they will rise up again, and I must be amongst them. Speak to him, Susan; tell him your mind."

"I should almost hate him, my lord," said the spirited girl, "if to dangle at my apron-string, in these times of active war, he idled on shore."

"I will bring him into parliament," said Waltham."

"And make a fool of me," replied Bowling. "If I spoke I should speak to a disadvantage as to my language; and I could not bear to sit for hours idle, listening to those great orators I could never hope

to rival, and having as the reward of my attention to my country's cause, only the gratification of a silent vote, or my name on a frank. We are not fit for parliament: we are too accustomed to be kings to dwindle down into senators. Collingwood is on the seas: he has daughters to whom he is almost a stranger; and although domestic in his manners, and eager to superintend the education of those to whom he is so attached, he sacrifices all for his country's interest: he toils with unre-mitted zeal in the cause of England, he forgets his private concerns in the public good, and he will sink into his grave, having shattered his health by his application, leaving a name to posterity to cherish and respect."

"It's very strange, my son," observed Lord Waltham, with a smile, "how men toil, that those who never knew them may hear of them, and those unborn may read their names. How they sacrifice present comfort for future fame; and fame after all is but air!"

"Oh!" said Susan, with rapture, "that I might hear, if I outlived my husband (which I pray may never be the case), his name in every mouth, his epitaph on every tongue, and see on the pages of history his future fame and glory. Go, Bowling, do not let the words 'wife, children, or

father,' detain you. I will pray for you, and watch over your children—every word you write shall be sacredly obeyed, and every record of your name shall be preserved with these." As Bowling entwined her in his embrace, and kissed the lips from which he had heard such spirited advice, Susan drew from her bosom a small book, in which every mention of her husband's name had been extracted from the Gazette, and carefully preserved near her heart.

"You ought to have been an empress," said Waltham.

"I scarcely *deserve*," she replied, "to be his wife."

"And can you bear to part with him you so much love ; from whose lips the words of reproach never fell—who watches you with affection, and who almost becomes an idolater in his worship of you ?"

"I can bear anything for his honour. He has arrived at a certain point ; if he remains inactive he will sink to the common level of the many hundreds who have not energy to advance ; his foot is in the stirrup, let him vault into the seat."

"I would not stay on shore," said Bowling, "after that for all the seats in parliament that ever were manufactured out of rotten boroughs.

A ship, my lord, you have power now — a ship !”

“ I almost wish,” said Waltham, “ that Noah’s ark had sunk, and that we had never heard of a navy. Every beggar in the street, who can sing a song, keeps grunting out something about Nelson ; every youngster is mad for the most uncomfortable service in the world. And now the ladies, touched with patriotic ardour, urge their husbands to forsake them, in order to be shot, or, my dear Susan, to become Nelsons and Collingwoods. It’s all nonsense, I tell you ; the trumpet of fame makes more fools than ever it makes heroes. But I think it is as well to send Bowling to sea to save my servant’s legs ; for ever since he was made Sir Thomas, I hear of nothing but applications. What’s this—another !—I’ll get you a ship to-morrow.”

Bowling opened a letter, which was as follows :—

“ ‘ Dear Sir Thomas Bowling,—I congratulate you with all my heart—’ ”

“ I’m quite awake to all that flummery,” said Lord Waltham ;—“ it’s a petition.”

“ ‘ And next to the capture of Martinique, I consider Trafalgar as the greatest action on record. I am getting rather old and crazy withal, my tim-

bers are all loosened, and I doubt if my ribs and knees will hold together much longer. I've lost a considerable number of my head-rails, and I've started my stern-post, so I consider I ought to be laid up in ordinary. There's a vacancy in Greenwich Hospital for a lieutenant, at least there will be in a week, for old Death has given Mr. Lan-yard such a shaking that he'll never be able to move if they cut his shores away. Now, sir, since I served under you, and my wife served under your lady, I consider I have some claims upon you ; and I venture to hope that you will not forget your old companion in arms, and think for a moment how gratifying it would be to me to lie up in ordinary in Greenwich Reach, rather than moulder away in Rotton Row. I understand your father is a lord ; one word from him and I might take up my moorings.' ”

“ I told you so, Bowling—I shall go mad—I shall indeed ! ”

“ Don't make any rash promises,” said Bowling, laughingly ; “ but for this generous fellow, I must intercede.”

“ Generous, indeed ! ” said Susan.

“ Very supplicatory ; but as for the generosity, Tom, my boy, I can't say much for that, unless indeed volunteering to strike me down the after-

hold, and calling me a ground tier butt, be taken as a proof of liberality of labour, however little solicited."

Bowling laughed, and explained what Watson had meant, and likewise the interpretation of his nautical language to the drunken coachman. "And now," he said, "it is my turn. I am indebted to that man twice for my life. In mounting the wall at Martinique, he parried a blow which would have split a thicker skull than mine. And when my poor little frigate the Thames was wrecked, that gallant fellow faced the boiling surf, which foamed and hissed like one universal cauldron—I tell you, assisted only by a weak line, he braved every danger. He left his wife and child to succour me; he dashed into the water; got on board the Thames in spite of all the opposition of the elements, and by him I was dragged on shore. Susan, my love, give my father a kiss; and after what I have said, speak what comes uppermost in your mind. The constant are always generous; it is merely the weak and the trivial who foster revenge for trifles—speak, girl."

"My lord, you have often asked me to solicit a favour that you might shew your affection for me. Your unbounded kindness has stopped my tongue until now; grant me what my husband would himself ask for the man who ventured his life

to save that which is far dearer to me than my own."

"Go, go, you coaxing little jade; order my carriage, Tom—what's his name, Watkins?"

"No, Watson."

"Well, Watson, consider it done—I won't dine until I have a promise."

CHAPTER XXI.

IN WHICH THERE IS A MAGNIFICENT EXPLOSION ; HALF A
DOZEN BATTLES ; TWO VERY INTERESTING DEATHS ; AN
EPITAPH ; AND AN END.

“FAME’s trumpet,” says Lord Collingwood, in one of his letters to Mr. Moutray, “makes a great noise, but the notes do not dwell long on the ear ;” and Bowling found that, although he had occupied a note of the trumpet, yet that his fame would soon dwindle into thin air by inactivity. He was, however, soon relieved from gardening, and did not agree at all in the expression of his former commander, “For my own part, I can say that I never have been perfectly happy since I left planting my cabbages and excellent potatoes.” Bowling, al-

though faithful and fond to his Susan, was out of his element on shore. With a light heart and a cheerful countenance he took his passage in the *Melpomene*, then commanded by the young and heroic Peter Parker, and joined the *Ocean* off Cadiz, on board of which ship Admiral Lord Collingwood had hoisted his flag. Here Bowling received instruction from every word of his commander; and here he learnt to abhor the abuse of that power, wisely invested, to inflict corporal punishment; he treasured up in his memory the words of that great man, when a captain, who was rigidly religious and fanatically enthusiastic, presented a long list of punishments: "I do not understand, Bowling," said he, "what kind of religion it is that finds a man praying all night, and flogging his men all day."

The *Ocean* ill accorded with Bowling's active disposition. Lord Collingwood, indeed, was active; for he corresponded with every one, from the Dey of Algiers to his gardener, and his whole day and half his night was devoted to this laborious exertion of the mind. He seldom came on deck; and his ship resembled the Foreign Office afloat.

"Dull work for you, Bowling!" he said one day. "But never mind; you shall yet have a chance. I have got a little service for Duckworth, and I intend to send you with him. When you come back

you will be able to tell us how Turks at Constantinople wear their turbans. Here is an order for you to join the Royal George; but mind, I shall have you at my right hand when I die. I shall not hold out long; and I would, if the country were kind enough to supersede me, rather die in the bosom of my family than in the command of a fleet. How long do you require to get ready?"

Bowling looked with some astonishment at the question: "How long, my lord? I am ready now."

"You are worthy of the rank you have attained. To-morrow I shall part with you."

"I hope, my lord, by your thus sending me away, you do not anticipate any movement of the enemy near you?"

"In all the enemy's ports," Lord Collingwood replied, "they are ready for a push out. They have tried at Rochefort and Brest to put to sea; but our squadron off the latter port could not be eluded, and they returned. At Cadiz the people are ready, and have the appearance of waiting for some reinforcement. Perhaps the northern squadron may come here in sufficient force to drive us off, and, joining the fleet at Cadiz, push up the Mediterranean, increasing their numbers as they go. But I think you will have time enough to rejoin me before they come this far."

A few weeks found Bowling on board the Royal George, the flag-ship of Sir Thomas Duckworth ; and not far from her, lying nearer the island of Tenedos, was the Ajax. The news of Bowling's arrival was known as soon as the event, and one of the first persons who came to see him was the fighting doctor, who was surgeon of the latter-named ship, and who was appointed on the application of Lord Waltham, who thought the gunpowder surgeon would blow up the whole parish, and kindly sent him afloat in the hopes of the enemy doing as much for him.

"There is another of your shipmates on board the Ajax, Sir Thomas," said the doctor, "and one who volunteered to fight your battles for you—Mr. Patrick O'Leary."

"Is he as wild as ever?"

"He is crazy now to join you, and swears his usual oath, about the seven great geese that eat the grass off Solomon's grave, that he would sooner serve under you than command the fleet himself."

Sir Thomas Duckworth having sent for Sir Thomas Bowling, the friends parted before the doctor could condole over the unfortunate truth, that he had never had a circumstance of late worth recording ; and little he thought, as he shook Bowling's hand, of the accident about to occur. It was the next day that the Ajax was discovered to be on

fire. Every remedy which the most active discipline could apply was quickly called into use ; but few know how the cry of fire on board a ship operates to overthrow all discipline. It seemed but a moment when the smoke was perceived below, before the sparks burst up the hatchways ; the rigging soon caught fire, and the flames ascended the tarred ropes with the velocity of rockets ; the whole making one grand and terrific fire-work, appalling to the spectators and desponding to the crew. But neither the melted pitch which fell like rain on the deck, the suffocating smoke which choked the adventurous below, nor the scorching heat of the crackling decks, could stop the doctor in his endeavours to extinguish the devouring element. By his side O'Leary seemed a fire-worshipper ; and he scouted with indignant scorn the many who, appalled at the rapidity of the flame, jumped overboard, and sought to save themselves by swimming. The doctor flourished the pipe of the fire-engine ; O'Leary pumped and cursed ; but it was evident the exertions made by these two might prolong the work of devastation, but never could extinguish the cause. The whole of the ship was on fire below ; and aloft the dangling ropes, the smoking canvas, and the scorched masts were witnesses of the terrific power which had partially consumed them. The guns were all loaded and shotted, and the

heat was sure to explode them. This deterred some of the boats from approaching as near as they might have done ; whilst the knowledge that the fire was below, and consequently in the vicinity of the magazines, kept the more cautious aloof from an explosion which threatened death and destruction to all. The cries of some, wounded by the fall of the spars aloft, were unheeded in the general dismay. Not even the doctor would attend to the moans and groans around him ; his object, his hope, was to succeed when all had given it up as useless.

In this moment of horror, when human life was sacrificed to discipline, none was nearer the ship than Bowling : he attempted to get on board, but the fire seemed vomited from the port holes ; and the guns, which every now and then went off, rendered his rashness culpable. He saw the doctor unhurt as yet, amidst the flames, working with all his usual zeal ; but it was evident that no human determination could much longer face the raging element, and the doctor called O'Leary from the useless attempt, and desired him to leap overboard and save himself.

“ Lape overboard and be drowned, by the piper, you mane ! I'm a magnificent diver, but bad luck to the stroke I ever swam.”

“ Get over the bowsprit-end, some boat will

pick you up. I was the last man on board the Thames; and I fancy I shall have no opposition to my determination to be the last now."

"Excepting always myself, your honour, for if it's worse to be roasted or drowned alive I can't exactly say; but I think I shall try a touch of both."

On the forecastle of the Ajax stood the sentinel, who had been planted there to remain until he was relieved; no power could make him quit his post; and although at this time, the beams being burnt below, the weight of the guns began to force in the decks, and the flames came up fresher as the destruction fed them with fuel, and the heat was such that the barrel of his musket defied the touch, there stood the sentinel awaiting his death with inconceivable unconcern.

"I relieve you," said the doctor: "save yourself before she blows up."

"The sergeant must do that."

"O'Leary," said the doctor, "that man is worth a million of marines," and he whispered something in O'Leary's ear.

"In the twinkling of a bed-post, your honour;" and O'Leary leaped upon the gallant fellow, and, assisted by the doctor, they threw him overboard.

"I'll bet a glass of whiskey, any how, he'll strike out now like a Briton."

“ Here’s a boat close-to, O’Leary; now for yourself; I’ll hold you up; jump.”

“ I’d always a precious aversion to bathing ever since we lost the man from the shark, in the Echo; but mayhap, your honour, the fishes don’t like their mate parboiled; here goes to put the fire on my back out;” and halloing to the last boat, which still lingered to save whilst hope remained, and in that boat was Bowling, O’Leary run out upon the bowsprit-end, with an intention of dropping overboard: the doctor was on the forecastle-bulwark, and was seen looking behind him at the fire, which seemed prolonging its flame to reach its victim, when one appalling explosion took place, which the continued bursting of the guns seemed to have heralded as they boomed over the grave of the Ajax.

Masts, yards, and spars, the guns, shot, the living and the dead, were blown into the air in horrible confusion; an awful silence followed the tremendous thunder of that burst, the breeze, which before blew to fan the flames, suddenly subsided into a calm, and the dense black smoke hovered over the spot as a pall over the ruin; then came the splash, the sullen splash of a heavy mast, disturbing the awful silence around, while lighted pieces of wood fell on board the nearer ships, threatening them with the same destruction. The

Ajax had disappeared, not a fragment of that beautiful ship remained united to another fragment; they were all torn asunder by the tremendous force of that explosion, and when the cloud of smoke was removed by the renewed breeze, the sea was calm and smooth as a mirror, betraying not the slightest record of the grave which had received the hull of the Ajax.

The boats were now active in the extreme; there was no further danger to be apprehended, and they used their utmost endeavours to save some of the men who were still swimming. O'Leary was never found; but the doctor, although nearer the danger, was picked up some distance from the ship, and alive: he was taken to the flag-ship, and ultimately recovered; but it considerably damped his ardour, and hindered him from witnessing the gallant passage of Duckworth's ships through the Hellespont. It was in this affair that Bowling lost his arm, from a splinter-wound.

One of those marble-shot, weighing 800 lbs., struck the Royal George, and Bowling was wounded; he was taken below, and the first man by his side, although strictly desired not to leave his cot, was the doctor. The arm was frightfully injured, and the bone broken; his best friend recommended amputation as the only method to avoid tetanus, and the operation took place before

the firing had ceased. They had not, in those times, any rail-road operators, whose consummate skill surmounts all obstacles, and relieves the sufferer from the knife in less than a minute ; science had not then made those immense strides, and the patient had to linger out a quarter of an hour in all the agony of dissection ; but Bowling never winced ; and when the fighting doctor cheered him up, he said, "Do you think, doctor, Susan will like a mutilated man to attend upon for life ?"

"Never mind her, Sir Thomas," said his friend ; "many a woman has rejoiced in the honourable wounds of her husband. If you had lost your arm from the falling of one of the spars of the Ajax it would not have been so comfortable ; but now, in action—a pension in reserve—the appearance of a real warrior partially dismantled, it's a subject of congratulation, and I should have no objection to such a wound myself, if it would not hinder me from being useful to my friends."

"God bless you, doctor, if I should die."

"Die !" interrupted the doctor ; "why, what is to kill you !"

"Remember my last words were for Susan."

"I think I'll get married myself, and fight my wife by way of a change. Fancy a man losing his arm, and talking of his Susan ; if love can beat an amputating knife, it must be very sharp indeed."

Bowling soon recovered. He saw the Castles of Abydos and Sestos as the fleet returned; and he left his benediction in very coarse language upon the large gun on the Asiatic side, which had rendered him lop-sided for life.

On his return to England he almost blessed the shot, for Susan's affections were warmer; her care greater; her solicitude unrivalled. The little Bowlings grew up, a strong resemblance to their father. The king gave permission for Sir Thomas to retain the name of Bowling; and a tower was added to the arms of the Walthams, in compensation for the limb of which the tower had deprived him.

Once more, in 1811, was Sir Thomas Bowling in command of a seventy-four; and his good fortune, which still attended him, placed him in a dead calm close alongside of a French eighty-gun ship. It was just such another action as that between the Victorious and Rivoli. It was the same triumph of animal courage, for there was no manœuvring; the action commenced during the existence of a very consumptive breeze, which soon died of its own exhaustion. The two ships attracted each other, and they soon closed. There they lay; the grape shot going through and through them, the sides almost touching. And when at last the flag of old England waved trium-

phant over the tricolour of France, each ship presented such a picture of carnage as is rarely seen in naval combats. Here, however, the angel which presided over the care of Bowling, seemed to have been scared away by the unusually long roar of the guns ; and Bowling was deprived of a leg. He was now unfit for the service in his own estimation, but not in the opinion of the doctor.

The purser of the French ship, who was a very small, deformed man, in making the best of the capture, congratulated his country on the extinction of one great officer in regard to his serving again. The doctor was furious ; the purser continued to maintain his opinion, and high words arose ; the doctor bridling his disposition to rudeness, in consideration of his adversary being a prisoner.

The purser talked much of a pair of foils which had buttons on ; the doctor recommended the armourer to be consulted ; the buttons were removed, and the points sharpened. A pretended fencing match took place in the ward-room ; and the little purser had a small hole drilled into him just below the breast-bone, which the doctor having made began to patch up.

It was his last duel ; he began to cool down into a regular kind of man ; and was afterwards killed in America, having volunteered his services

in a boat expedition. From the time of his entrance into the service until the day he was shot, he never allowed any service to be undertaken without volunteering to be in it. He was an excellent man—one who protected the weak against the tyranny of the strong; and no man regretted him more than Bowling.

The peace of 1815 laid Sir Thomas Bowling up in ordinary. He was quick enough to perceive that the world was tired of war, and that each nation had involved itself so overwhelmingly in debts and difficulties, that universal peace would be long maintained. And when the man, who had spread the fire of desolation throughout the world, was finally condemned to his solitary rock, as one all nations feared, and respected even in his island captivity, Bowling hung up his sword in his dressing-room, by the side of the first wooden leg, which his carpenter had manufactured from a part of the mast of his last prize.

He was too wise to destine his sons for a profession which exists only in war; he procured them honourable employment elsewhere. And when he was promoted to the rank of admiral, he saw at once the greatest object of his ambition, that of commanding a fleet, for ever at an end.

Harmony and peace had permanently established themselves. He, however, had shewn in his life that

activity, perseverance, and vigilance, must ever succeed ; that to every man the same hope which animated him, might overstep all obstacles ; and that the impressed boy might live to hoist the admiral's flag.

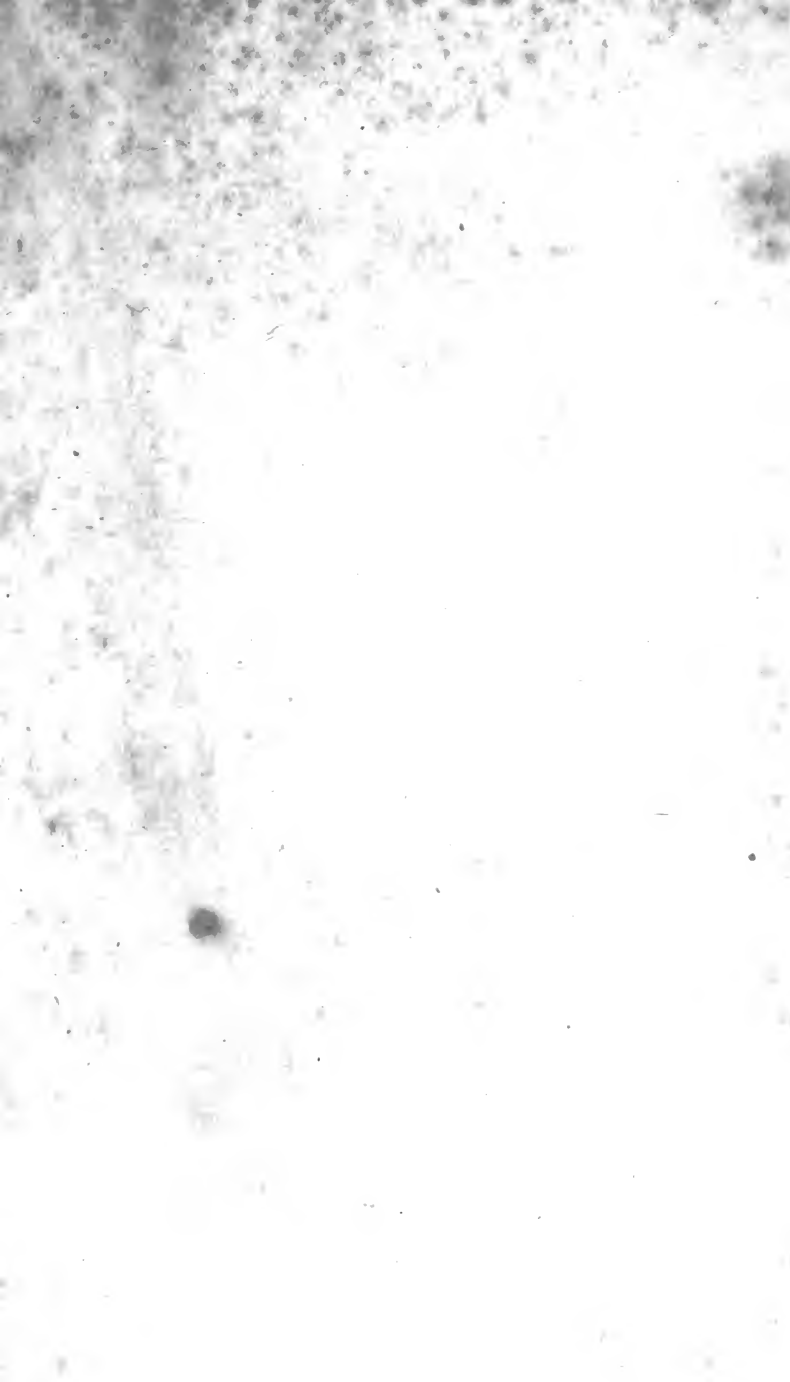
The Sailor King placed him in Greenwich Hospital as its commander : the country applauded *that* appointment ; for who was more deserving of it than Bowling ? He was welcomed there by hundreds who had fought under him. Old Watson related again and again the glorious attack on Martinique ; and his wife suggested, that now, as they were all on an equality, she would ask Susan to tea.

As Governor of Greenwich Hospital, Bowling died ; the highest admirals held his pall. And on the base of the broken flag-staff which covers his tomb, is his epitaph in the words of Dibdin :—

“ Here a sheer huik lies poor Tom Bowling,
The darling of our crew,
No more he'll hear the tempest howling,
For death has broached him to.
Tom's form was of the manliest beauty,
His heart was kind and soft,
Faithful below he did his duty,
But now he's gone aloft.

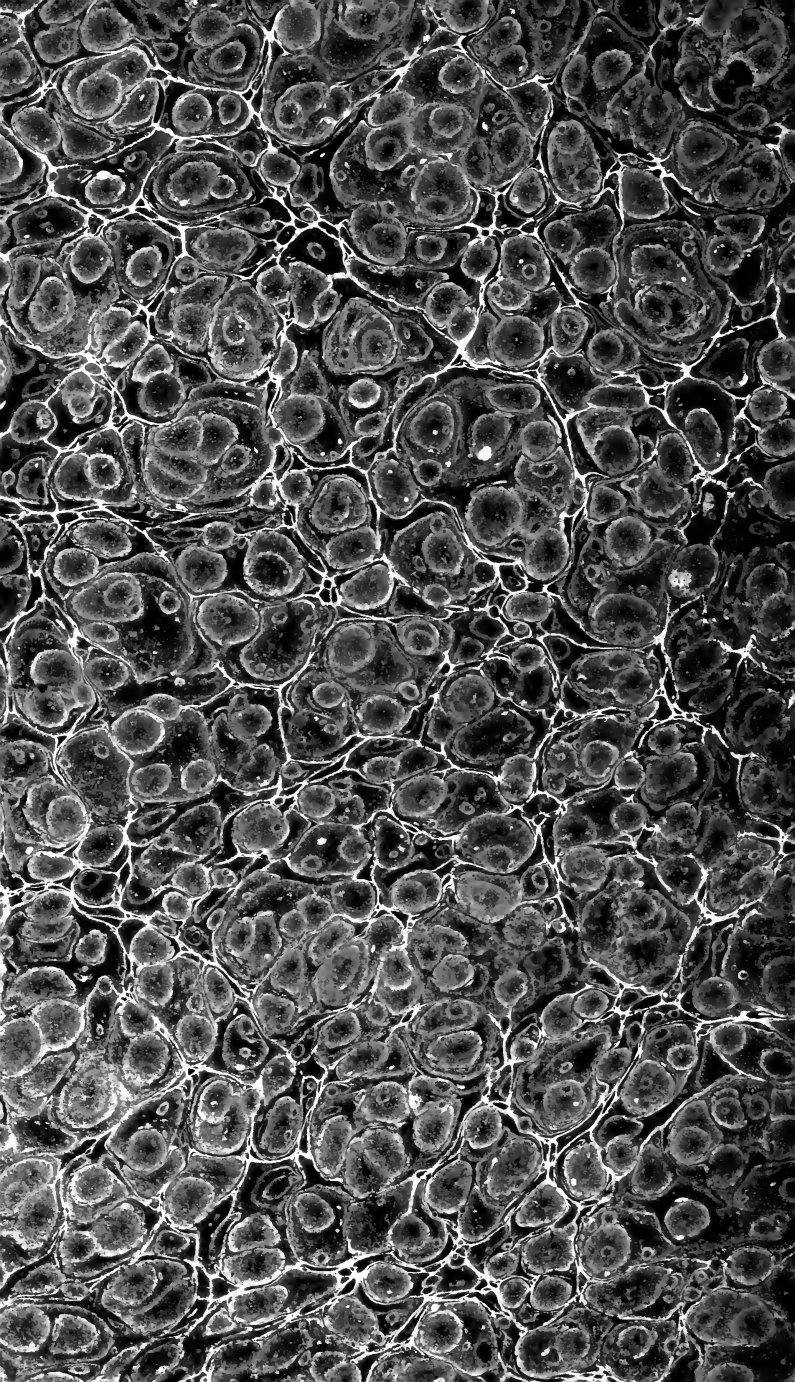
“ Yet shall poor Tom find pleasant weather,
 When He, who all commands,
Shall give, to call life's crew together,
 The word to pipe all hands.
Thus death who tars and kings despatches,
 In vain Tom's life has doffed,
For though his body's under hatches,
 His soul is gone aloft.

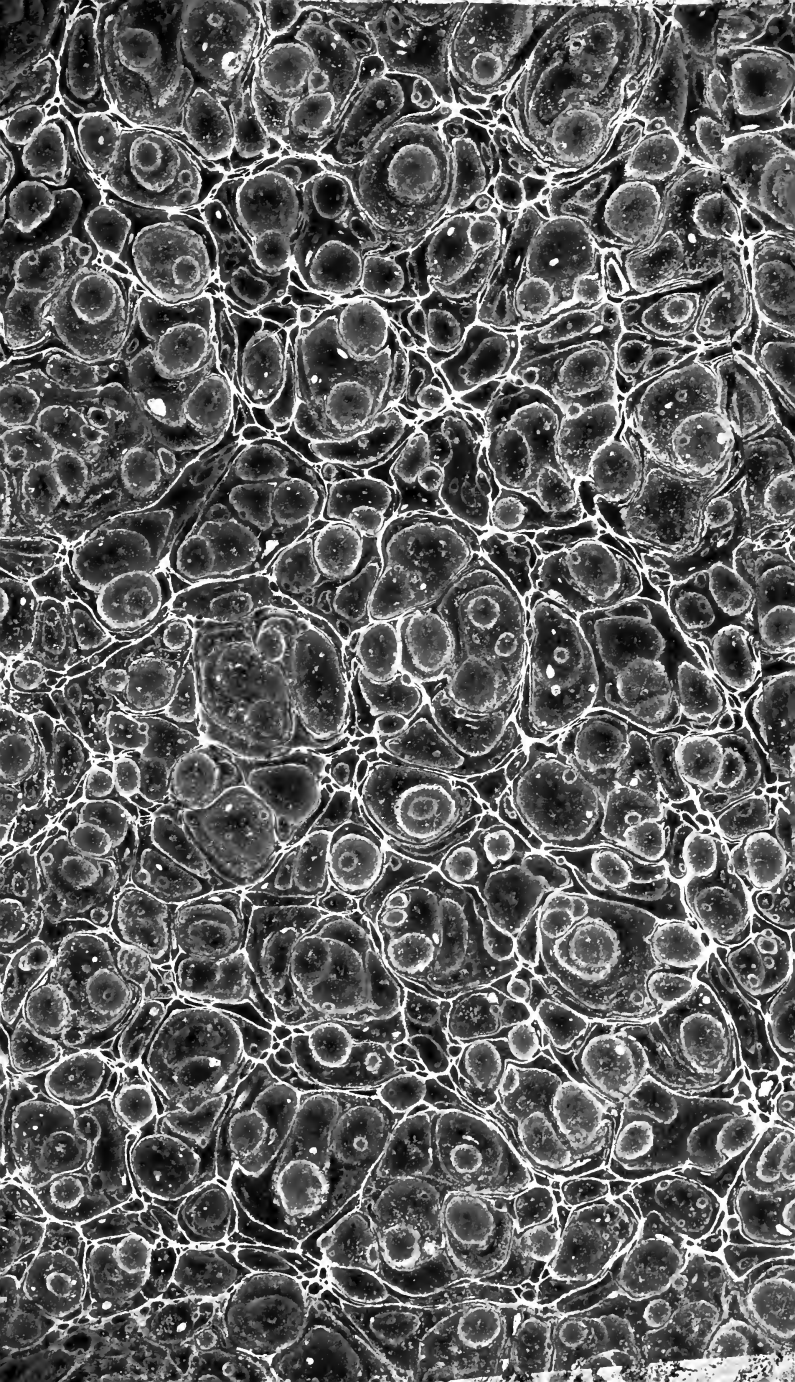
FINIS.











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